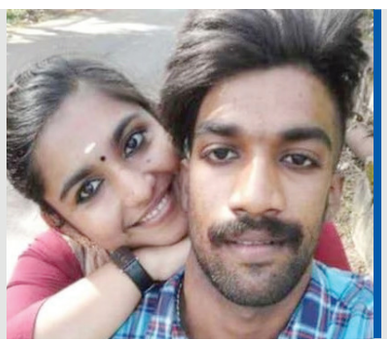
NATION

Kerala woman who poisoned lover gets death

≫ Page: 4 ≪



BUSINESS

India leading in technology evolution, says WEF report

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Rishabh named captain of Lucknow Super Giants

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in www.magzter.com 21 JANUARY 2025 | TUESDAY | BENGALURU | 20 RAJAB, 1446 AH Vol 4 | Issue No 21 | Pages: 8

DON TO DRILL AND GRILL

Emergency at Mexico border; 2 genders soon; boost for oil traders; eyes on Mars

WASHINGTON DC, 20 JAN

Taking oath as the 47th President of US Donald Trump said that he would announce a "national emergency" at the southern border in Mexico and a "national energy emergency" that would allow oil extractors to "drill, baby drill" - issues that had been key campaign pitches and resonated with his 'Make America Great Again' (MAGA) supporters.

Trump will also order the government to recognise only two biological sexes and end federal diversity programmes.

"The golden age of America begins right now," Trump said in his inaugural address.

Taking a page from Elon Musk, Trump also vowed to plant an American flag on Mars. Trump says he wants to send American astronauts to Mars, saying he "will pursue our manifest destiny into the stars" and "plant the stars and stripes on the planet Mars."

"From this day forward, our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world. We will be the envy of every nation, and we will not allow ourselves to be taken advantage of any longer." He vowed to put America "first".

Trump said "all illegal entry will immediately be halted," with few details on how he will achieve that. He said he would end the practice of releasing migrants in the United States to pursue asylum, known as "catch-and-release," but didn't say how he would pay for the enormous costs of detention.

As for Mexico, presidents are able to use the National Emergencies Act to move money from one federal agency's account to another without congressional approval. The measure is intended to assist presidents with resources in instances of emergency and not to serve as an alternative funding mechanism: setting the budget is the primary role of Congress.

Trump storms back to White House with a strongman persona with the vision of an all-powerful presidency and also with a promise to aggressively reset US policies in a range of domains including immigration, tariffs, and energy. *—Agencies*

>>>MORE ON PAGES 3, 5, 6

US President Donald Trump takes oath in the Rotunda of the US Capitol in Washington on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

> **From this day forward, our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world. We will be the envy of every nation, and we will not allow ourselves to be taken advantage of any longer**
>
> **—Donald Trump**
> US President

VIVEK LIKELY TO EXIT DOGE

WASHINGTON DC, 20 JAN

Vivek Ramaswamy, co-leader of the Department of Government Efficiency alongside Elon Musk, is reportedly considering stepping down from the role. The reason is believed to be his plans to launch a campaign for Ohio governor, leaving Musk to lead the Trump-backed initiative aimed at streamlining federal bureaucracy. The departure comes amid reported tensions within DOGE and criticism of Ramaswamy's involvement in the project. According to CBS News Ramaswamy plans to announce his Ohio gubernatorial campaign as soon as the end of January. *—Agencies*

EAM meets Japan, Australia counterparts in US

WASHINGTON DC, 20 JAN

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday held meetings with his counterparts from Australia and Japan here during which they discussed bilateral issues and those pertaining to QUAD. An initiative of the Donald Trump administration in its first term, QUAD comprises Australia, India, Japan and the United States. The outgoing Joe Biden administration elevated it to the leadership level. A QUAD ministerial is expected to be the first order of business in terms of international meetings of Marco Rubio once he is confirmed by the US Congress and sworn in as the Secretary of State, which is reflective of the importance given to this grouping by the second term of the Trump administration. *—PTI*

>>>MORE ON P3

Soldier killed in J&K encounter with terrorists

SRINAGAR, 20 JAN

An Indian Army soldier was killed following an overnight encounter with terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Sopore area, officials said on Monday. The soldier was injured in the exchange of fire with terrorists in a hideout at Zaloora Gujjarpati in Sopore police district and died as he was being evacuated from the scene of the gunbattle, they said. Security forces laid out a cordon on Sunday when they noticed fire while busting a militant hideout. They maintained vigil at Zaloora Gujjarpati during the night and intensified searches for suspected terrorists in the area this morning, the officials said. *—PTI*

Sanjay Roy gets life term in RG Kar rape & murder

KOLKATA, 20 JAN

A Kolkata court has sentenced Sanjay Roy to life imprisonment for the rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The Additional District and Sessions Judge, Anirban Das, delivered the verdict on Monday, rejecting calls for the death penalty on the grounds that the crime did not qualify as "rarest of the rare."

Roy was convicted for the heinous act committed on 9 August last year, which sparked nationwide outrage and sustained protests across West Bengal. Judge Das ordered Roy to pay a fine of 50,000 and mandated the state government to compensate the victim's family with Rs 17 lakh—Rs 10 lakh for the death and Rs 7 lakh for the assault.

In his ruling, the judge stated, "I am sentencing you to life imprisonment... for causing injury during the act of committing rape that led to her death." The court noted that all sentences would run concurrently, indicating that Roy would serve life imprisonment until his death.

During the proceedings, Roy maintained his innocence, claiming he was wrongfully convicted. His defence attorney requested an alternative punishment to allow for "reformation," while the CBI sought the death penalty, calling the crime "rarest of the rare." Family members of the deceased expressed dissatisfaction with the court's decision and announced intentions to appeal, alleging a flawed investigation. "We are dismayed. There was a larger conspiracy behind this crime," stated the victim's mother.

Chief Minister Mamata said that the death penalty would have been more likely if the case had remained with Kolkata Police. The case had initially been handled by the police until the Calcutta High Court transferred it to the CBI. *—PTI*

>>>MORE ON P4

Lawyers speak to the media after Sanjay Roy, was convicted in RG Kar Hospital on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

> **We are dismayed. There was a larger conspiracy behind this crime**
>
> -RG-Kar victim's mother

TELANGANA STUDENT SHOT DEAD IN US

HYDERABAD, 20 JAN

A 26-year-old student from Telangana was allegedly shot dead in the US by unidentified persons, his family members said here on Monday.

K Ravi Teja, had gone to the US in 2022 and was looking for a job after completing his MS course eight months ago, they said, and urged the government to help in bringing back his mortal remains here as early as possible.

"I have come to know that my son was shot dead. My appeal to the government is to send back the mortal remains as early as possible. I am not able to speak anything else," his grieving father told reporters.

"Whether I will be alive or not till that time (the body arrives)," his father said, fighting back tears.

Teja had told his father that he would come back home after securing a job.

In November 2024, a 22-year-old youth from Khammam district of Telangana was shot dead by miscreants at a gas station in the United States where he was working, family members had said. *—PTI*

2ND INCIDENT IN A WEEK

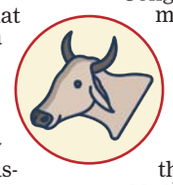
Cow beheaded, calf mutilated in Honnavar

UTTARA KANNADA, 20 JAN

In a disturbing incident, miscreants beheaded a pregnant cow, severed its legs, and mutilated its calf in Kondakuli, Salkodu village, Honnavar taluk. The assailants absconded with the cow's body, leaving behind its head, legs, and the injured calf.

The police reported that the cow belonged to a local resident, Krishna Achari, who had set the animal out to graze on Sunday. Upon searching for the cow the next day, Achari discovered the gruesome scene. Authorities have registered a case against unknown individuals under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and have initiated an investigation.

This incident follows recent reports of similar atrocities, including the dismemberment of three cows in Chamarajpet, Bengaluru, and the injury of another cow's tail in Nanjangud, Mysuru.



Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara has called for a thorough inquiry into these brutal attacks. He expressed concern over the rising violence against cows and instructed police to investigate the underlying causes and potential affiliations of the perpetrators.

The BJP has condemned the Congress-led state government, blaming it for a lenient approach towards what they term "fanatic elements." State party president BY Vijayendra described the Honnavara incident as shameful, accusing the government of fostering a "communal atmosphere" and disregarding law and order. "The Home Minister must recognise the deteriorating situation and take immediate action to restore order," he stated.

The incidents have raised alarm among local communities and prompted calls for stronger measures to protect animals in the region. *—PTI*

4 sell infant for ₹4L in Belagavi

BELAGAVI, 20 JAN

The Belagavi police have arrested four women involved in the illicit sale of a six-month-old male child for Rs 4 lakh. The child had been separated from his mother for three months.

Belagavi Superintendent of Police Bhimashankar Guled outlined the sequence of events. A woman had entrusted her three-month-old baby to a marriage broker named Lakshmi, who facilitated the mother's second wedding. "Marriage broker Lakshmi took the baby, claiming the newly married couple needed time to enjoy their life together, and subsequently handed the child over to Sangeeta from Kolhapur," SP Guled explained. Sangeeta then sold the infant to Anasuya in Halyal, Uttara Kannada, who, under the false pretext that the baby was an orphan, sold him to Dilshad in Belagavi. Dilshad and her husband, parents of two daughters, were eager for a male child.

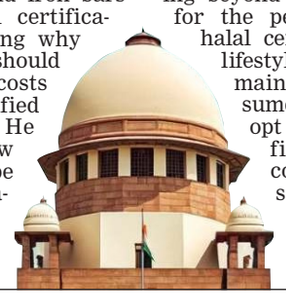
After three months of search, the mother approached Lakshmi for help, but received no response. Turning to an NGO, she sought police assistance last week. *—Salar News*

Shocked by halal marks on non meat products: Solicitor General

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta raised concerns in the Supreme Court about the halal certification of non-meat products, such as cement and iron bars, during hearings on petitions challenging a directive from Uttar Pradesh that prohibits halal-certified food products, except for exports.

Mehta expressed shock that even non-food items like cement and iron bars required halal certification, questioning why non-believers should bear higher costs for such certified products. He remarked, "How can 'besan' be halal or non-halal?" highlighting the confusion surrounding halal certifications extending beyond meat. Counsel for the petitioners said halal certification is a lifestyle choice .They maintained that consumers voluntarily opt for halal-certified products, countering the solicitor general's assertion. *—PTI*



SC stays defamation case against RaGa

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

The Supreme has put a halt to trial court proceedings against Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi concerning a criminal defamation case filed by BJP worker Naveen Jha. The case stems from remarks made by Gandhi during a public speech in Chaibasa where he allegedly referred to Union Home Minister Amit Shah as a "murderer."

A bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta issued notice to the Jharkhand government and Jha, seeking their responses to appeal. Gandhi's counsel, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, argued that existing legal precedents dictate that only the aggrieved individual can file a defamation complaint, indicating that a third party cannot initiate such proceedings. *—PTI*

OXFAM REPORT

UK's top 10% held half of colonial wealth from India

DAVOS, 20 JAN

A new report by Oxfam International has revealed that, during a century of colonial rule from 1765 to 1900, the UK extracted a staggering USD 64.82 trillion from India. Of this wealth, USD 33.8 trillion was claimed by the richest 10 per cent in the UK, a sum sufficient to layer London in £50 notes nearly four times.

Released on the opening day of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, the report titled "Takers, not Makers" illustrates the enduring impact of colonialism on global inequality. Oxfam asserts that the patterns of wealth extraction and exploitation established during colonial times persist today, with multinational corporations benefiting primarily the wealthiest in the Global North.

Oxfam notes that by 1900, India's share of global industrial output had plummeted from 25 per cent in 1750 to just 2 per cent, largely due to British policies that stymied local manufacturing. Modern-day global supply chains mirror these colonial systems, exploiting cheap labour in the Global South, particularly among female workers.

The report further highlights that historical inequalities, such as caste and gender disparities, were exacerbated during the colonial era. Furthermore, it draws parallels between the past and the present, citing the legacy of corporate greed that contributed to various social crises, including the opioid epidemic. Oxfam concludes that the intricate web of colonialism has left lasting scars on countries in the Global South, with systemic exploitation and dependency continuing to shape socio-economic conditions today. *—PTI*

The report further highlights that historical inequalities, such as caste and gender disparities, were exacerbated during the colonial era ***PHOTO: X***

PHOTO: X

Holiday declared for Belagavi schools

BELAGAVI, 20 JAN

The Belagavi district administration has declared a holiday for schools up to grade ten, including Anganwadi, in Belagavi town and taluk on Tuesday due to the All India Congress Committee (AICC) convention marking the 100th year of the Congress convention, which Mahatma Gandhi chaired once in 1924. Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate Mohammed Roshan declared the holiday to avoid inconvenience to students, as the event is expected to witness a heavy crowd. "Nearly 2 lakh people are expected to attend the convention, which could cause difficulties for children traveling to school and back due to heavy rush and traffic hazards. Therefore, the holiday has been declared for classes up to grade ten," said DC Roshan.—*Salar News*

3 killed in Kalaburagi accident

KALBURGI, 20 JAN

Three people died after a car allegedly collided head-on with a truck on Monday in Magadhampur village, Kalburgi at 12.30pm. Three others in the car sustained injuries and have been shifted to the nearest hospital, police said. The deceased have been identified as Avinash, 24, Abhishek, 26, and Sanjeev, 40. Police said that the car was going from Bidar to Dharur in Telangana when it collided with a truck, adding that further investigation is underway. —*PTI*

Atheeq to continue as Additional Chief Secretary to CM

BENGALURU, 20 JAN

Karnataka government has extended the tenure of LK Atheeq, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister and the Finance Department, beyond his scheduled retirement. He will continue in his role as Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister until further notice. The senior IAS officer (KN: 1991) was originally set to retire on 31 January. In addition, Principal Secretary of the School Education and Literacy Department, Ritesh Kumar Singh, has been transferred to the Finance Department as Principal Secretary. —*PTI*

Aero India to stall flights at KIA

BENGALURU, 20 JAN

The Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) is expected to face significant flight disruptions from 5 to 14 February, when the Aero India – 2025 takes place at the nearby Yelahanka Air Force Station, airport authorities said on Monday. Both runways at the airport will be closed for several hours on each day of the air show, a statement issued by the airport said. The KIA statement said between 5 and 8 February, flight operations will be suspended for six hours daily. On 9 and 10 February the operation will be stalled from 9am to 12pm. On 10 February, not flight will take off or land between 2pm and 4pm. The runways will be closed between 12pm and 3pm on 11 and 12 February. Operation will also be suspended on 13 and 14 February for three hours each. The KIA, which handles over 40 flights per peak hour, is a major hub for domestic and international air travel. —*Salar News*

CM flays BJP charges of corruption against State Govt

Ashoka says Congress using commission for Belagavi rally

BENGALURU, 20 JAN,

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday demanded that Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka should come up with evidence before making allegations of corruption against the State government.

Speaking to reporters Siddaramaiah said, "Where have these irregularities occurred? Before making such allegations, he should explain that. Just because he makes the claim, it doesn't mean it is true."

Ashoka on Monday had dubbed the Congress-led Karnataka government as "60 per cent commission government" and further alleged that the money is being used for a "big rally" of the Congress.

The BJP leader had earlier told ANI, "The Congress govt is 60% commission govt. They are taking 60% commission in all sectors which is being used for the forthcoming Congress Samavesha."

He also alleged that the law-and-order situation had deteriorated in the State. "The Congress has looted the people of Karnataka for the last 20 months. This is the worst government, the State has ever seen, " he alleged.

CM Siddaramaiah PHOTO: ANI

R Ashoka PHOTO: PTI

On Sunday, Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Priyank Kharge said that Congress was gearing up to organise a public rally under the slogan 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' on 21 January to commemorate 100 years of Mahatma Gandhi becoming the party president.

"Since we could not do it as a mark of respect for Dr (Manmohan) Singh. We postponed it (the public rally) and that's happening on 21 January," Kharge had told ANI.

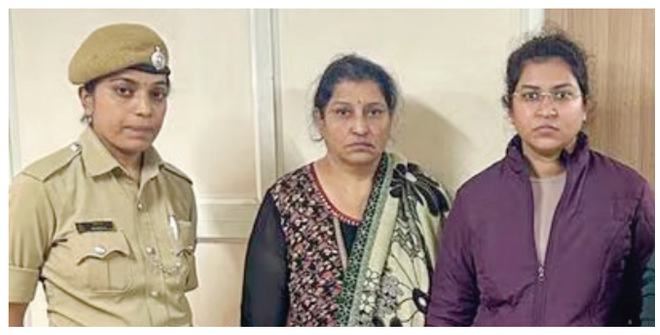
Taking a dig at Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Priyank had said that no "misinterpretation" or "deviation" from Babasaheb Ambedkar's constitution will be tolerated. "The previous programme of Gandhiji's presidency that marked 100 years was postponed due to the demise of our former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. We had to postpone the public rally 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' which was to send a strong message to the central government that we will not tolerate any deviation from Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar's constitution or any misinterpretation by the BJP, especially Amit Shah. You heard what he said in the Parliament about Babasaheb Ambedkar," Kharge, said.

—*ANI*

BJP slams CM over K'taka's Davos absence

Bengaluru, 20 Jan

BJP state president BY Vijayendra, on Monday, hit out at Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for Karnataka's absence at the World Economic Forum in Davos, alleging that the Congress government has no roadmap, urgency or attempts to reclaim the State's lost glory of being the 'Startup Capital of India'. On X Vijayendra alleged that even after Karnataka lost the prestigious title of 'Startup Capital of India' to Maharashtra, the State Government remained in a deep slumber. —*PTI*



Techie Atul Subhash's wife Nikita and her family face charges of abetting Atul's suicide PHOTO: PTI

SC denies custody of techie Atul's son to his mother

BENGALURU 20 JAN

The Supreme Court has ruled that the four-year-old son of Atul Subhash, the Bengaluru techie who died by suicide in December, will remain in the custody of his estranged mother, Nikita Singhania. This decision came on Monday following a plea by Anju Devi, Subhash's mother, seeking custody of the child.

The court, led by Justice BV Nagarathna and Justice SC Sharma, made the ruling after a video interaction with the child. Devi had requested a week's time to file a more detailed affidavit, but the court denied the request, emphasizing the urgency of the case. After a brief break, the boy appeared on the video link, and the court proceedings resumed to protect his identity. Earlier, Singhania's lawyer informed the court that the child had been enrolled in a boarding school in Faridabad and would be withdrawn to accompany his mother to Bengaluru, where she is required to fulfill bail conditions.

Singhania and her family face charges of abetting Subhash's suicide. Subhash, 34, had accused his wife and her family of harassment in a video and suicide note before his death, sparking controversy over the misuse of laws meant to protect women.

The Supreme Court noted that the child had not spent much time with his grandmother, and the matter will be referred to a lower court. —*Salar News*

Have sacrificed much for party, says DyCM

BELAGAVI, 20 JAN

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday said he has sacrificed a lot to protect Congress and the current government but has not worries about it.

Referring to latest developments involving PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi, Shivakumar said he has no dissent with the party. "The BJP is misinforming the media by planting the baseless and false news," he said.

Shivakumar rejected creations of the BJP's media wing rumours that a few ministers from the Siddaramaiah Cabinet were planning to ask Rahul Gandhi to change AICC General Secretary and Karnataka In-charge Randeep Singh Surjevala.

"The BJP is spoiling the dignity and image of the media by planting systemic false news against the ruling party," Shivakumar said, adding that he joined the party when he was a student and has contributed much to its growth, but expected not much in return. —*Salar News*

70-year-old sexually assaults minor boy, held

BENGALURU, 20 JAN

A 70-year-old man has been booked for alleged sexual assault on a minor boy under Vidyaranyapura police station limits in the city.

According to the complaint, the incident took place on Sunday evening and came to light after the 11-year-old boy revealed the matter to his parents.

The accused allegedly picked up the boy from a place near a temple, and took him to a near-by shed. The boy revealed the matter to his parents, based on which a complaint was filed. —*Salar News*

3 arrested in M'luru heist case

MANGALURU/BIDAR, 20 JAN

The Mangalore police have arrested three accused in connection with the Kotekaru Bank Robbery case.

They were arrested near Madurai in Tamil Nadu. The robbers have been identified as Murugandi Devar, Prakash alias Joshua, Manivenan from Dharavi, Mumbai.

On 17 January, a robbery took place at Kotekaru Bank in Mangaluru. After the bank robbery, the accused went to Thiruvanveli in Tamil Nadu.

Police Commissioner Anupkumar said that two sacks, talwar and 2 pistols were seized from the arrested.

- On 17 January, a robbery took place at Kotekaru Bank in Mangaluru. After which the accused went to Thiruvanveli in TN

Bidar heist

In another incident, in Bidar last week, the Rs 93 lakh was looted from a SBI ATM, where the robbers shot dead a security guard and inflicted serious injuries on another. Regarding this, Municipal Administration Minister Rahim Khan, who is also the minister in-charge of Bidar, received wrong information about the incident. He had told media people that two people were killed by the robbers. Khan later corrected himself after local residents said one of the guards died on the spot, while the other was admitted to the hospital and is currently recovering. Khan's mistake, however, gave ammo to BJP leaders to launch an attack on him, saying that he was unaware of what was going on in his own district. The BJP's Bidar district president Somnath Patil mocked the minister had no information about Swakshetra.

Khan received criticism from the public, too, for speaking to the media without even collecting primary information about the robbery. —*Salar News/ANI*

Man locks up, assaults trio for 3 days

VIJAYAPURA, 20 JAN

The owner of a brick manufacturing unit in Vijayapura held captive three labourers and assaulted them for three days for leaving work. The grievously injured trio has been admitted to the government hospital in Vijayapura.

Vijayapura Superintendent of Police Lakshman Nimbaragi confirmed that brick factory owner Khemu Rathod and his relatives assaulted labourers Sadashiva Madar, Sadashiva Babaladi and Umesh Madar using PVC pipes.

Rathod, who runs a brick factory at Gandhi Nagar, pays Rs 600 to the labourers for every eight-hour work day. They are also provided a common accommodation, police said.

The trio, who proceeded on leave on 14 January to celebrate Makara Sankranti, returned on 16 January and told Rathod that they were leaving the job. Enraged, Rathod gathered his relatives, locked the labourers in a godown and assaulted them for three days.

APMC Police Inspector Mallaiah Matapati said the trio was kept under illegally confinement in the godown and assaulted. Rathod later shifted the injured to the hospital, he said.

Vijayapura MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal said that he has asked Nimbaragi to take strict action against the attackers. He said the labourers were held captive and assaulted for three days. "The accused must be punished seriously to avoid repetition of such acts in feature," Yatnal said.

—*Salar News*

Lokayukta raids Legal Metrology Dept

BENGALURU, 20 JAN

Lokayukta officials conducted a surprise inspection at the Department of Legal Metrology on Monday morning and exposed widespread irregularities, including employees signing the attendance register days in advance.

The operation, led by Upalokayukta B Veerappa and a 40-member team, uncovered locked sections of the office and absenteeism well past 11am. The staff present said some officials were yet to arrive, while others had signed attendance for future dates.

PHOTO: X

Notices have been issued and disciplinary action has been recommended against those found absent without authorisation.

Located on Infantry Road, near the Bengaluru City Police Commissioner's Office, the department was under scrutiny following allegations of corruption and inefficiency. During the raid, officials also discovered suspicious digital transactions on employees' phones. When questioned, the employees failed to provide satisfactory explanations. —*Salar News*

EX-SERVICEMAN JUMPS IN FRONT OF METRO

BENGALURU, 20 JAN

A 49-year-old former Air Force officer was saved from taking his own life by jumping in front of a metro train at Jalahalli Metro Station on Monday morning.

Anil Kumar Pandey, a native of Bihar and resident of Jalahalli, leapt onto the tracks as a train was approaching the station. The train driver acted quick and brought the train to a sudden before it could run over Pandey. Staff at the Metro station rescued Pandey and handed him over to police.

Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) officials confirmed that Pandey escaped unhurt. However, the incident caused a temporary disruption in metro services on the Green Line. —*Salar News*

Plaint against RSS chief for hate speech

BENGALURU 20 JAN

A complaint has been lodged against Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Chief Mohan Bhagwat for his recent remarks equating the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya with India's 'true independence.'

S Manohar, General Secretary of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC), filed the complaint at the High Grounds police station in Bengaluru on Monday.

The controversy stems from a speech Bhagwat delivered in Indore, where he reportedly suggested that the date of the temple's consecration should be observed as 'Pratishtha Dwadashi', symbolising Bharat's true independence.

- Bhagwat's speech had suggested that the date of the temple's consecration should be observed as 'Pratishtha Dwadashi'

Manohar's complaint accuses Bhagwat of disrespecting the sacrifices of countless freedom fighters who fought against British rule to achieve independence. He further alleged that the remarks were 'anti-national' and called for the police to take appropriate action against the RSS chief.

The High Grounds police have acknowledged the complaint and are assessing the matter for further investigation. —*Salar News*

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

'Kantara 2' shoot to face ban if rules are ignored

BENGALURU, 20 JAN

Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre said on Monday that the shooting for 'Kantara Chapter 1', also referred to as 'Kantara 2', in Hassan district, will be banned and action will be taken if inspection, reveal that the film crew had violated rules, causing damage to wildlife or flora and fauna.

Sources said the locals have complained that the crew of the film starring Rishabh Shetty have been causing damage to the environment in and around Gavibetta, Herur village in Hassan district, by reportedly using explosives while shooting.

The crew have also allegedly ventured deep into the forest when the permission to shoot is restricted to the village grazing land.

'Kantara 2' crew had allegedly ventured deep into the forest when the permission to shoot is restricted to the village grazing land PHOTO: X

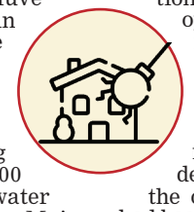
"Farmers are already struggling with wild elephant attacks. Despite the Supreme Court's directive to protect forests, officials have been negligent. Immediate action must be taken to prevent further damage," warned a man in a video message, claiming to be a former Zilla Panchayat member. The unverified video is also being circulated on social media.

He said if the film crew violates the conditions and causes any damage to wildlife or flora and fauna, the officials can immediately stop the shooting and take action.In the order issued on Monday, Khandre directed the Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Forest, Environment and Biology to visit the shooting spot at the earliest.Sources said the locals have also lodged a case at the Yesalur Police Station. —*PTI*

BBMP clears illegal structures in RR Nagar

BENGALURU 20 JAN

Initiating a large-scale clearance drive, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), on Monday, removed at least 40 illegally constructed sheds and garages encroaching Rajakaluve (stormwater drain) in the HMT ward of the Rajarajeshwari Nagar zone in the City.



The encroachment was located along approximately 100 metres of the stormwater drain near Tumkuru Main Road, extending towards the SRS signal and adjacent to a government first-grade college. According to BBMP officials, around 45 unauthorised sheds including factories and garages were identified as illegal constructions in this area. Acting Zonal Commissioner Satish directives , BBMP officials, accompanied by police personnel and marshals, inspected the site and initiated the demolition process. Prior to the operation, residents living in the encroached structures were relocated to ensure their safety. The officials said that two JCB machines were deployed. They said that the owners of these sheds had been issued notice earlier. Following the drive, a stern warning was also issued to the residents in the vicinity, cautioning them against any future encroachments.

—*Salar News*

Two women Naxalites killed in Chhattisgarh

GARIABAND, 20 JAN

Two women Naxalites were killed and one personnel of the CRPF's elite Commando Battalion for Resolute Action was injured on Monday in an encounter between security forces and Naxalites in Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district, a police official said. The CoBRA commando's injury is superficial. The exchange of fire occurred in a forest along Chhattisgarh-Odisha border during an anti-Naxal operation, Gariaband Superintendent of Police Nikhil Rakhecha told PTI. "A CoBRA jawan sustained a superficial bullet injury and has been airlifted to Raipur for medication. His condition is stable." With this, 28 Naxalites have been killed so far in Chhattisgarh in January. 18 Naxalites were killed on 16 January in Bijapur district. 219 Naxals were neutralised by security forces in encounters in Chhattisgarh in 2024. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Vijay backs farmers, says DMK using Parandur

CHENNAI, 20 JAN

Actor-politician Vijay, leader of Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK), supported farmers protesting against proposed airport in Parandur. Addressing a crowd at Podavur, he accused ruling DMK of benefitting from the project, which he claims would destroy 90 per cent of local farmlands and waterbodies. Referring to DMK's previous opposition to other development initiatives, Vijay questioned why they were backing the airport. Vijay emphasised the importance of natural resources, asserting that development should not come at the expense of agriculture. He announced "Kala Arasiyal" initiative, pledging to stand with farmers to halt the project. The farmers' protest is now on its 910th day, with banners proclaiming "Don't need an airport, need agriculture)." *—PTI*

Chhattisgarh landless labourers to get Rs 10K a yr

RAIPUR, 20 JAN

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Monday launched a scheme to provide Rs 10,000 a year financial assistance to landless farm labourers, and said the measure will augment their net income and secure their own future. More than 5.62 lakh beneficiaries will be covered under the scheme titled, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Bhoomihin Krishi Majdoor Kalyan Yojana, which besides landless farm labourers, also covers a host of financially vulnerable social groups, the government said. Under the scheme, financial assistance of Rs 10,000 annually will be given to landless farm labourers (in a single instalment), declared the CM. *—PTI*

'UP ranks first in employing under MGNREGA'

LUCKNOW, 20 JAN

Uttar Pradesh ranks first in providing 100 days of employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Keshav Prasad Maurya said on Monday. Maurya, who heads the Rural Development and Integrated Rural Development Department, said in a post on X, "Under the MGNREGA scheme, as of 2024-25, 3,13,076 families in Uttar Pradesh have been provided with 100 days of employment." The Rural Development Department is also providing training to unskilled workers. Family members, aged between 18 and 45 years, of MGNREGA cardholders who have completed 100 days of employment are being trained under the initiative. *—PTI*

EAM carries Modi's letter for President Trump

EAM meets with counterparts from Japan, Australia in US

WASHINGTON, 20 JAN

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is carrying a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for US President Donald Trump, sources said on Monday.

He is representing PM Modi as his special envoy at President Trump's inaugural function on Monday, the sources said.

Jaishankar also held meetings with his counterparts from Australia and Japan here during which they discussed bilateral issues and those pertaining to QUAD.

An initiative of the Donald Trump administration in its first term, QUAD comprises Australia, India, Japan and the United States.

The outgoing Joe Biden administration elevated it to the leadership level.

A QUAD ministerial is expected to be the first order of business in terms of international meetings of Marco Rubio once he is confirmed by the US Congress and sworn in as the Secretary of State, which is reflective of the importance given to this grouping by the second term of the Trump administration.

"Delighted to meet FM @SenatorWong, a Quad colleague, in Washington DC today. As always, enjoyed our discussion on the state of the world," Jaishankar posted on X after meeting Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong.

"Good to meet with FM Takeshi Iwaya of Japan. Reviewed the progress in our bilateral cooperation. Also discussed developments pertaining to Quad," he said in another post after his meeting with the Japanese foreign minister.

According to informed sources in the transition team, Rubio and President-elect Trump has made it a priority to take the India-US relationship to the next level.

Rubio is keen to have his first bilateral with Jaishankar once he is confirmed as Secretary of State, the sources said.

The meeting might happen within a few hours of Rubio arriving at the Foggy Bottom headquarters of the State Department.

Rubio's Senate confirmation is expected on Monday evening, and he is likely to be sworn in as the top American diplomat soon.

All three QUAD foreign ministers are here to attend the inauguration of Trump as the 47th president of the US on Monday. *—PTI*

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets Japan's Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya in Washington DC. ***PHOTO: PTI***

Donald Trump will likely reshape the diplomatic landscape significantly ***PHOTO: ANI***

Trump's second term may boost US-India ties

WASHINGTON, 20 JAN

Donald Trump's anticipated return to the White House may herald a stronger alignment between India and the United States, according to Khanderao Kand, founder and director of the Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS). This alignment could bolster collaborative diplomatic efforts on pressing global challenges, including the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Kand, speaking in an interview with PTI, expressed optimism about the Trump administration's approach, suggesting it would reflect a more mature foreign policy compared to the current Biden administration. "We are likely to see a more nuanced ongoing policy alignment in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific," he said.

Regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Kand noted that both India and Trump share a commitment to diplomatic engagement and negotiation to resolve disputes. He highlighted the potential for further collaboration on global issues, reflecting shared viewpoints.

In addition to addressing the Russia-Ukraine situation, the India-US relationship may see improved dialogue on other contentious foreign policy matters, including trade with Canada and Bangladesh. Kand emphasised that despite Trump's "America First" stance on tariffs, it is possible for the two nations to find a transactional approach to reduce trade friction.

On the topic of H-1B visas, which facilitate the employment of foreign workers in specialty occupations, Kand indicated a supportive shift among influential figures in Trump's circle, including Elon Musk and Indian-American politicians like Vivek Ramaswamy.

This awareness of the necessity for tech immigrants is seen as crucial in maintaining America's competitive edge, particularly in fields like artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

As Trump prepares to take office once more, the potential for strengthened India-US ties could reshape the diplomatic landscape significantly. *—PTI*

397 cases of MCC violations lodged ahead of Delhi polls

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

Delhi Police registered 397 cases of alleged violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) between January 7 and 19 in the national capital ahead of the assembly elections, an official said on Monday.

A total of 14,183 people were arrested under various provisions, including the Excise Act, during this period, according to a statement.

Police have intensified vigilance at border checkpoints and conducted crackdowns on illegal activities, including the smuggling of arms, liquor and drugs, the statement added.

Since the MCC came into effect on 7 January, Delhi Police recorded 397 cases of alleged MCC violations and confiscated 212 illegal firearms and 295 cartridges, the statement said.

They also seized 36,223 liters of liquor valued at more than Rs 1 crore, 74.86 kg of drugs valued at more than Rs 15 crore, and over 1,200 banned injections.

Law enforcement agencies seized Rs 3.09 crore in cash and 37.39 kg of silver, the statement said.

Polling for all 70 assembly seats in Delhi will be held on 5 February, with votes to be counted on 8 February.

Meanwhile, dubbing AAP a party of "algavwad", "atankwad" and "afwah", BJP leader Anurag Thakur accused it of supporting separatists and raised questions on the spate of hoax bomb threats to schools in Delhi.

There was no immediate reaction from AAP on the allegations.

Congress and AAP appear different outwardly but are the same inside, Thakur said at a press conference. *—PTI*

RaGa writes to Nadda, Atishi over patients' plight near AIIMS

New Delhi, 20 Jan

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has written to Union Health Minister J P Nadda and Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, flagging the plight of hundreds of patients and their family members huddled on the footpath and subway outside AIIMS here and sought concrete steps to resolve this "humanitarian crisis". The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha also urged the central government to take concrete steps to strengthen the public healthcare system in the upcoming budget and increase the necessary resources for it. *—PTI*

Pushkar Singh Dhami. ***PHOTO: ANI***

Uttarakhand cabinet approves UCC manual

DEHRADUN, 20 JAN

A cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Monday resulted in the approval of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) manual. This step follows a thorough review by the legislative department.

Chief Minister Dhami asserted that the government has delivered on promises made during the 2022 elections. He stated, "We had promised the people of Uttarakhand in 2022 that we would bring the UCC Bill as soon as our government was formed. We kept that promise." He also noted that implementation dates would be announced shortly.

UCC will establish uniform personal laws applicable to all, irrespective of religion, gender, or caste, covering marriage, divorce, adoption.*—ANI*

Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Uddhav Thackeray met NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Monday amid differences among Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition ***PHOTO: ANI***

Spurious liquor blamed for 7 deaths in Bihar

BETTIAH, 20 JAN

Authorities in Bihar's West Champaran district have launched an inquiry following the deaths of seven individuals allegedly due to the consumption of spurious liquor in the region, which has been dry since 2016. Reports indicate that the fatalities came to light on Sunday, although the first occurred four days prior, meaning all seven deceased had already been cremated.

Superintendent of Police Shaurya Suman confirmed that all deaths were reported from the Lauriya police station area. While locals attribute the deaths to illicit alcohol consumption, Suman stated that two had different causes: one victim was killed by a tractor, and another suffered a paralytic attack.

"The first death occurred on 15 January but we were only informed of the situation today. The reasons behind the other five deaths remain unclear since the bodies were cremated before police awareness," Suman explained.

West Champaran's Deputy Development Commissioner, Sumit Kumar, noted the difficulty in determining the cause of death due to the cremation of the bodies. He highlighted the urgency of the investigation, instructing the team to provide a report within 24 hours. The team is also tasked with verifying the identities of those who died in Lauriya over the past few days.

One relative of a victim claimed, "My brother Pradeep consumed liquor with his friend Manish. Both have died."

The sale and consumption of alcohol have been prohibited in Bihar since April 2016 under the government led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. *—PTI*

Police said it is difficult to ascertain the cause of the deaths as the bodies were cremated ***PHOTO: PTI***

Uddhav meets Sharad amid discord in MVA

MUMBAI, 20 JAN

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray met NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar in Mumbai on Monday amid differences among the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition, comprising of Shiv Sena (UBT) NCP (SP) and Congress. Pawar, the architect of the opposition coalition, has stepped in to calm the turbulence within the MVA and said he would convene a meeting of the three constituents to discuss the upcoming local body elections.

Shiv Sena (UBT) recently declared it will contest the local body elections alone. The political allies contest local elections independently but Sena (UBT)'s decision has triggered speculation about the viability of MVA. Pawar pointed out that the mandate of the INDIA alliance at the centre, and the MVA in Maharashtra, is to contest elections together at the national and state level, respectively, not at the local level. "We have never discussed or suggested contesting together at the local self-government level," Pawar said. Meanwhile, Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar claimed Deputy CM Eknath Shinde might be dispensed with. *—PTI*

KMM seeks early talks with Centre, defers march

CHANDIGARH, 20 JAN

The Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) has called on the Indian government to reschedule a planned meeting with protesting farmers from February 14 to an earlier date. The appeal came as farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal continues his indefinite hunger strike, which began on 26 November demanding legal guarantees for minimum support prices for crops.

KMM, alongside the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), has been at the forefront of protests at Khanauri and Shambhu border points for the past 11 months. They recently announced the deferral of a march to Delhi, initially set for 21 January until 26 January.

A central delegation, led by Priya Ranjan, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, met Dallewal at Khanauri, proposing talks in Chandigarh on 14 February. However, KMM leader Sarwan Singh Pandher argued that this date is too far away. On 26 January, farmers plan a nationwide tractor march, parking outside BJP offices. *—PTI*

Farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who was on fast-unto-death, received medical aid recently ***PHOTO: PTI***

WEF 2025

India slips to 3rd spot on trust yardstick

DAVOS, 20 JAN

A recent study has revealed that India has slipped to third place in global trust levels towards government, businesses, media, and NGOs, according to the annual Edelman Trust Barometer released ahead of the World Economic Forum. This marks a concerning trend, particularly as low-income populations exhibit significantly less trust compared to wealthier individuals.

The report also ranks India low at 13th place in terms of international confidence in Indian-headquartered companies. Canada leads this category, followed by Japan, Germany, the UK, France, and the US. Countries such as Mexico, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, China, and Brazil also surpassed India. China maintains the top position for overall trust, while Indonesia has surpassed India for second place due to an improved score.

The survey indicates a stark contrast between income groups in India: 65 per cent of low-income individuals trust local institutions, compared to 80 per cent of high-income respondents. Globally, the research highlights alarming trends such as an increasing normalisation of violence and misinformation as means for enacting change, with 63 per cent of respondents feeling unable to discern credible news sources.

Edelman's study, which surveyed over 33,000 participants across 28 countries, indicates that societal trust is deteriorating, with a significant majority (69 per cent) of respondents expressing concern that leaders in government, business, and media intentionally mislead the public. Furthermore, 53 per cent of younger respondents supported forms of hostile activism, reflecting a growing divide in public sentiment.

Despite trust in employers remaining the highest globally at 75 per cent, the survey reveals widespread resentment towards the wealthy, with many believing that the rich evade their fair tax contributions, contributing to societal problems. *—PTI*

It shows contrast between income groups: 65% of low-income people trust local institutions, compared to 80% high-income respondent ***PHOTO: PTI***

PHOTO: X

MP man dies by suicide over 'harassment'

RAJGARH, 20 JAN

A 27-year-old man died by suicide in Rajgarh, Madhya Pradesh after releasing a video accusing his wife and in-laws of harassment, police said on Monday. Ravi Kashyap hanged himself from a ceiling fan at his home in Biaora town on Sunday, an official said. In the video that surfaced on social media, Kashyap claimed that his in-laws were mentally harassing him. He also said that his wife had wanted to live alone, despite his best efforts to win her back. Biaora city police station in-charge Virendra Dhakad said that further legal steps will be taken after an investigation. —*PTI*

Delhi man arrested for multiple cheating cases

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

The Delhi Police has arrested a man wanted in multiple cheating cases, in which he duped several people by promising to secure their children's selection in competitive exams, an official said on Monday. Police said the accused, Sanjeev Jha, who was also a proclaimed offender, was arrested by the cyber cell team of the crime branch. Jha's modus operandi involved posing as a faculty member at the Defence Career Academy in Delhi Cantonment, claiming to have voluntarily retired from the Indian Army and served in the Union Public Service Commission. "Leveraging these false credentials, he lured parents into paying large sums, by promising to help their children secure guaranteed selection in the NDA and other government exams," said Additional Commissioner of Police Sanjay Kumar Sain. —*PTI*

SC asks 23 states, UTs to file reports on road safety

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

The Supreme Court on Monday directed 23 states and seven union territories to file compliance reports indicating implementation of the Motor Vehicle law's recent provisions besides rules on electronic monitoring and road safety measures. A bench comprising Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan noted five states and a UT, namely, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Delhi, had filed their compliance reports. The top court on 2 September, 2024 passed directions on the implementation of Section 136A of the Motor Vehicles Act read with Rule 167A of the Motor Vehicles Rules which allow authorities to electronically monitor speeding vehicles. The bench has now asked the remaining 23 states and seven UTs to file their compliance reports which will be shared with the Supreme Court committee. —*PTI*

SC orders video conference facilities for Yasin trial

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the registrar general of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to ensure proper video-conferencing facilities at a Jammu special court hearing two cases against jailed JKLF chief Yasin Malik and others. The SC bench also directed the Delhi High Court registrar general to ensure proper video-conferencing facilities in Tihar jail where Malik is lodged. The bench directed both registrars to file status reports on 18 February and posted the hearing on the CBI plea on 21 February. "We have perused the observations made by the (special) judge (of the Jammu court). At two places, he has recorded that the video-conference system in his court was not functioning properly," the court said. —*PTI*

RG Kar convict claims he's innocent, being framed

CBI seeks death penalty, labels crime 'rarest of rare'

KOLKATA, 20 JAN

Sanjay Roy, convicted of the rape and murder of an on-duty doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, appeared in court on Monday to assert his innocence, claiming he had been "wrongly held guilty."

The court on Saturday found Roy guilty of sexually assaulting and throttling the doctor to death in August last year.

"I am being framed and have not committed any crime. I have not done anything, yet I have been pronounced guilty," Roy told the court before his sentencing. He also alleged that he was beaten in prison and coerced into signing documents.

Roy further asserted that when the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) took over the case, medical tests conducted at a railway hospital yielded no incriminating results. When questioned by the judge about his family, Roy mentioned that he had a mother, but no relatives had visited him since his arrest. He noted that he had been residing in a police camp prior to his arrest.

File photo of rape and murder convict Sanjay Roy being taken to the CBI office at CGO Complex in Kolkata PHOTO: PTI

The presiding judge, Anirban Das of the Additional District and Sessions Court in Sealdah, reminded Roy that the verdict was based on the evidence presented during the trial. Roy had already provided extensive statements during three hours of questioning by defence and prosecution lawyers.

The prosecution, represented by the CBI lawyer, sought the death penalty, labelling the crime as "rarest of the rare." They argued that imposing the maximum punishment was essential to uphold public faith in the justice system. Conversely, Roy's defence argued that the prosecution failed to demonstrate that he was beyond rehabilitation and pleaded for a sentence less severe than death.

Meanwhile, the parents of the deceased medic in the RG Kar hospital rape-murder case said that they were not satisfied with the verdict of the court pronouncing life imprisonment till death for the convict.

"We are shocked. How is this not the rarest of rare cases? An on-duty doctor was raped and murdered. We are dismayed. There was a larger conspiracy behind this crime," the mother said.

The judge said the crime did not fall under the "rarest of the rare" category, which justified not imposing the death penalty on the convict. —*PTI*

Kerala woman who poisoned lover gets death

T'PURAM, 20 JAN

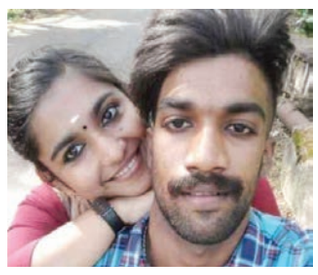


PHOTO: X

A court in Kerala on Monday sentenced a 24-year-old woman to death for the murder of her boyfriend in 2022.

The Neyyattinkara Additional District Sessions Court also sentenced her uncle, Nirmalakumaran Nair, the third accused in the case, to three years in jail.

The convict, Greeshma, had sought leniency in sentencing by citing academic achievements, lack of prior criminal history and the fact that she is her parents' only daughter.

In its 586-page verdict, the court observed that there was no need to consider the convict's age and other circumstances over the gravity of the crime committed.

The Victim, Sharon Raj, was a native of Parassala in Thiruvananthapuram district.

The court observed that the convict conspired to operate the crime in phases, she had a criminal background as she attempted to murder the youth earlier and tried to end her life after the arrest to divert the investigation.

Expressing satisfaction with the judgment, Sharon's mother Priya said she was grateful to the court for issuing such an exemplary order.

Special Public Prosecutor VS Vineeth Kumar said the verdict was fully justified and the court observed that the case fell under the rarest of rare category. "The court noted that the convict was a brilliant criminal, who meticulously planned the murder," he said.

Kumar said despite Greeshma's belief that she could not be detected, scientific investigation by the probe team led to her arrest.

The court also rejected Greeshma's claim that she had no criminal background, citing her attempt to poison Sharon by mixing paracetamol tablets into fruit juice. But it failed when he refused to drink it, on 22 August, 2022, Kumar said. —*PTI*

GALA NIGHT WITH COLDPLAY

British band Coldplay performs during its Music Of The Spheres World Tour at the DY Patil Sports Stadium in Navi Mumbai PHOTO: PTI

Five cops responsible for Badlapur custodial death

MUMBAI, 20 JAN

A magistrate's inquiry has held five policemen responsible for the custodial death of Akshay Shinde, accused in the Badlapur school sexual assault case.

The magistrate on Monday tendered its inquiry report in a sealed cover to the Bombay High Court, which was hearing a plea filed by Shinde's father, Anna Shinde, accusing the police of killing his son in a fake encounter.

The officials involved included senior police inspector Sanjay Shinde of the Thane crime branch, assistant police inspector Nilesh More, head constables Abhijeet More and Harish Tawade and a police driver.

A bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Neela Gokhale perused the report and said the government was bound to register a case based on the inquiry and sought to know which probe agency would investigate the case.

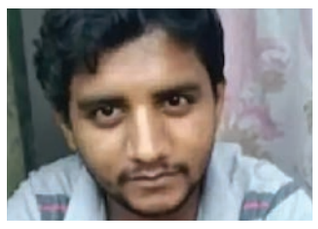


PHOTO: PTI

- A bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Neela Gokhale said the government was bound to file a case based on the report and sought to know which agency would probe the case

"The magistrate has conducted an inquiry and submitted its report. In the report, the magistrate has concluded that the five cops are responsible for the death of accused Akshay Shinde," the court said.

The bench noted that as per law, a first information report (FIR) should be registered against the five policemen, and an investigation must be conducted.

"You (government) are bound to file an FIR based on this magistrate report. Tell us which agency will investigate the matter," it said.

The bench directed for a copy of the inquiry report to be furnished to the prosecution and Anna Shinde.

"We shall keep the original report and all documents and witness statements annexed to it with us for now. The prosecution might need it when it probes the case," it said. —*PTI*

Six booked in TN for assaulting SC teenager

MADURAI, 20 JAN

Police at Usilampatti in Tamil Nadu's Madurai district booked cases against six persons allegedly for assaulting a Scheduled Caste (SC) teenager and forcing him to prostrate before them, a police official said on Monday.

The teenager said that six persons belonging to Hindu community took offence when he walked in the village with his dhoti folded at the knees during the Purattasi festival a few months ago. This led to an argument between the two.

Apprehending further trouble, the teenager stayed outside the village for some days. However, when he returned home for the Pongal festival, the accused 'forcibly' took him to a remote place in the village and assaulted him while making casteist insults, the police said, but rejected claims that they urinated on him. —*PTI*

Central team in J&K village to probe 17 mysterious deaths

RAJOURI/JAMMU, 20 JAN

A high level inter-ministerial team on Monday visited Badhaal village in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district to ascertain the cause of death of 17 members of three families under mysterious circumstances, officials said.

The central team headed by a director-rank officer in the Ministry of Home Affairs reached Rajouri district headquarters on Sunday evening and received a briefing from senior district, health and police officers.

Home Minister Amit Shah has ordered the constitution of the inter-ministerial team to ascertain the causes of deaths in the three families linked to each other in a remote village, about 55 km from Rajouri town, between 7 December and 19 January.

Members of the Central investigation team interact with villagers in Badhaal village of Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district PHOTO:X

The officials said the team reached Badhaal around 11.30 am and visited the bereaved families even as grave diggers were preparing the last resting place of Yasmeen Kousar, 15, the sixth child of Mohd Aslam, who died at the SMGS hospital in Jammu on Sunday evening.

The central team divided itself in two groups immediately after reaching the village and are undertaking their investigation, they said. —*PTI*

Fire breaks out again at Maha Kumbh site, no casualties

MAHAKUMBH NAGAR, 20 JAN

A fire erupted near the Kinnar Akhara camp in Sector 16 at the Maha Kumbh Mela on Monday. Officials reported no casualties. This follows a blaze the previous day caused by a cylinder explosion, which consumed 18 tents in Sector 19 at the world's largest religious gathering.

At approximately 9.30am, fire personnel at the Ann Kshetra station saw smoke near the Kinnar Akhara camp and promptly alerted the control room. While fire department vehicles and personnel responded swiftly, by the time they arrived, local attendees had already extinguished the flames using water and sand.

Workers inspect remains of tents a day after a fire broke out at the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj PHOTO: PTI

An inspection revealed that a small tent at the Shri Hari Divya Sadhna Peeth camp had ignited, but thankfully, no injuries were reported.

On Sunday, a major fire broke out in Sector 19 affecting a camp set up for Kalpwasis by Geeta Press and the Akhil Bharatiya Dharma Sangh. The fire escalated quickly, leading to multiple LPG cylinders exploding. No casualties were reported. —*PTI*

'A CONCERNING MATTER'

Son moving court on father's burial shocks SC

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

The Supreme Court expressed its dismay on Monday over a man's need to approach the highest court for permission to bury his father according to Christian rites in a Chhattisgarh village, after local authorities failed to resolve the matter.

Justices BV Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma were hearing a plea from Ramesh Baghel, who challenged a decision from the Chhattisgarh High Court that dismissed his request for burial in a designated Christian area of the village graveyard.

"Why should a person who has lived in a particular village be denied burial there?" the bench questioned, noting that the body had been kept in the morgue since 7 January. The judges expressed their regret that Baghel was compelled to seek intervention from the Supreme Court, stating, "It is concerning that neither the Panchayat, state government, nor the High Court could resolve this issue."

PHOTO: X

- Baghel reported that villagers had "aggressively objected" to the burial, with police threatening him with legal action
- Solicitor General Tushar Mehta indicated that there was no burial ground available for Christians, proposing instead a site 20km away from the village

Baghel reported that local villagers had "aggressively objected" to the burial, with police threatening him with legal action. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta indicated that there was no burial ground available for Christians, proposing instead a site 20 kilometres away from the village.

Senior Advocate Colin Gonsalves, representing Baghel, contended that the affidavit submitted by the state revealed that family members had previously been interred in the village, arguing that the refusal was based on the deceased's Christian faith.

In response, Mehta asserted that Baghel was urging to bury his father in the local grounds to provoke tension between tribal Hindus and Christians, while Gonsalves countered that such actions could signify an attempt to marginalise the Christian community in the region. —*PTI*

SC seeks report on Mishra 'influencing' witnesses

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

The Supreme Court on Monday sought a report from Uttar Pradesh Police after allegations, accusing Ashish Mishra of influencing witnesses in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, surfaced.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh directed the Lakhimpur Kheri superintendent of police (SP) to file the report in the court.

"In our considered view the veracity, genuineness and reliability of such material can only be gone into by the police administration. The police administration may submit a report in support or against the allegation made in the application seeking cancellation of bail," the bench said.

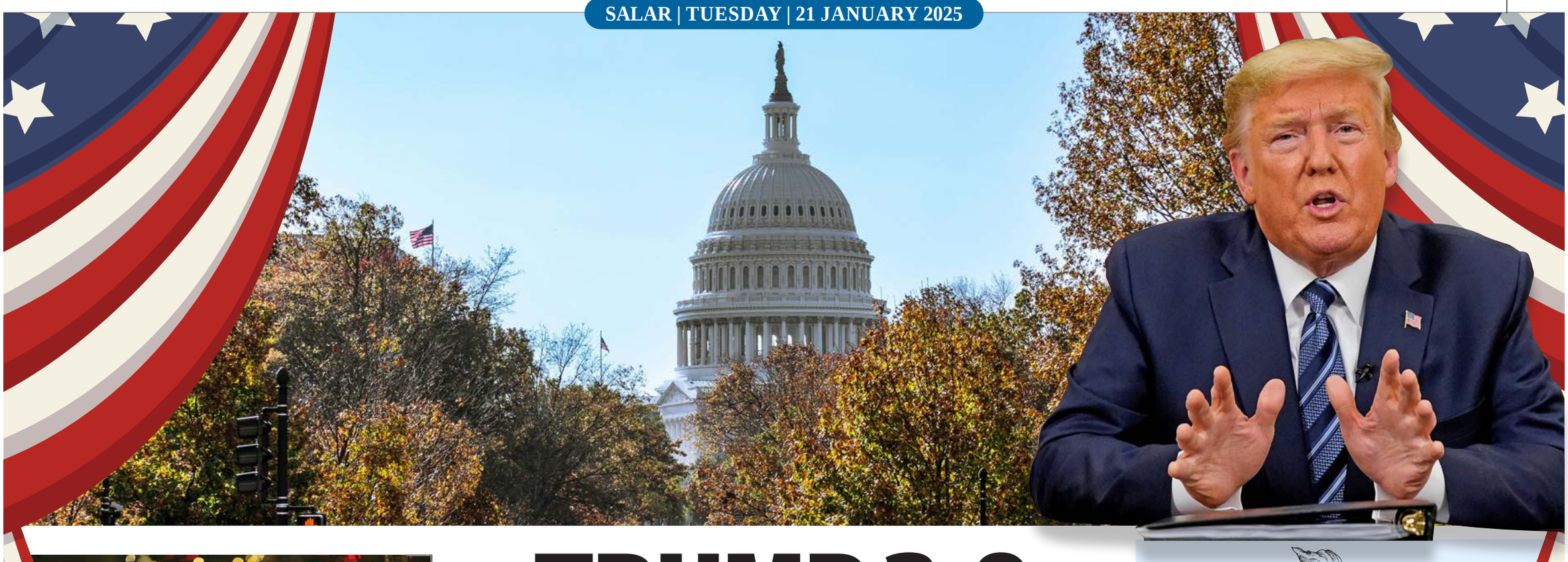
Ashish Mishra, son of union minister Ajay Mishra, denied the allegations in his affidavit, and said every time the matter was listed, such averments were made for the cancellation of his bail granted by the top court.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the complainants, claimed that he had an audio recording of an attempt made to influence crucial witnesses in the case.

Seeking the cancellation of Ashish Mishra's bail, Bhushan said the court may ascertain the authenticity of the material brought before it.

Senior advocate Siddharth Dave, appearing for Ashish Mishra, opposed Bhushan's submission, saying his client was being targeted unnecessarily.

He said his client was in Lok Sabha secretariat in Delhi on the day of the alleged public meeting. —*PTI*



TRUMP 2.0 MAVERICK DON RETURNS

World braces for 4 years of unpredictability

NEW YORK, 20 JAN

In the weeks between his phenomenal electoral victory and swearing-in as the 47th President of the US, the world got a preview of what a second Donald Trump presidency will entail – both for itself and America.

Trump talked about making Canada the 51st state of the US, suggested taking control of Greenland and the Panama Canal and floated the idea of changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America – all this before he was sworn in as American President on 20 January.

With Trump set to take the oath of office in the United States Capitol Rotunda on Monday, the world appears to be fastening its seat belt as it gets ready for four more years of a tumultuous and unpredictable Trump presidency.

Trump, the oldest person in US history to be elected president, has gone from being a businessman, real estate tycoon and reality TV star to becoming the country's first former US President to be declared a convicted felon.

And after surviving two assassination bids during his 2024 campaign, the 78-year-old remained unstoppable with American voters giving him a second term.

From the time he left office after his loss in the 2020 presidential election to his nomination as the Republican candidate in the 2024 race, Trump continued to dominate the American news cycle and the country's psyche.

He refused to accept the November 2020 result that brought Joe Biden to the White House, and a stunned nation watched his supporters storm the US Capitol on January 6. The riots disrupted a joint session of the US Congress which was in the process of affirming the presidential election results.

His third run for the job in 2024 was characterised by a slew of indictments and criminal cases, and a conviction in a New York court – making him the first former US president to be held guilty of a crime.

President Trump with First Lady Melania ***PHOTO: X***

A grand jury found him guilty on 34 counts of falsifying business records. The Biden-Harris campaign said at the time that no one is above the law while Trump called the verdict the result of a "rigged" political system.

Just days before his swearing-in, Trump was sentenced to no punishment at all in his hush money case, with Judge Juan Merchan giving him an unconditional discharge.

Throughout all this, his ardent supporters have rallied behind him and his policies, including on the economy and immigration.

The 2024 election took place against the backdrop of concerns over the economy, illegal immigration and the wars in west Asia and Europe. Trump's support base saw him as the only one who could offer solutions to these.

"I will end the illegal immigration crisis by closing our border and finishing the wall, most of which I've already built," Trump told cheering supporters at his party's national convention, referring to the country's southern border.

Trump has also vowed that if he returned to the White House, "inflation will vanish completely".

Trump pledged to end the Russia–Ukraine war after Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reached out to congratulate him on his Republican presidential nomination.

The four years of his second presidency will define not just how the US deals with its pressing domestic issues, it will also dictate its place in the world. The world is watching and gearing up. —*PTI*

Migrant families prepare for mass deportations

MIAMI, 20 JAN

Parents around Nora Sanidgo's large, rectangular dining table had lunch before signing documents to make the Nicaraguan immigrant a legal guardian of their children, entrusting them to her if they are deported. She gave a list of what to carry with them: birth certificates, medical and school records, immigration documents, her phone number.

"Talk to your children and tell them what can happen, let them have my phone number on hand, let them learn it, let them record it," Sandigo said Sunday.

For the group at Sandigo's southwest Miami home and for millions in the United States illegally or with temporary legal status, the start of Donald Trump's second term as president on Monday comes with a feeling that their time in the US may end soon. Trump made mass deportations a signature issue of his campaign and has promised a raft of first-day orders to remake immigration policy.

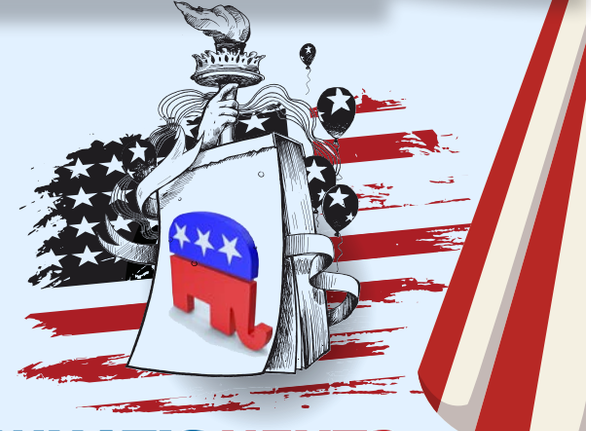
"You don't have to be afraid, you have to be prepared," Sandigo told the group of about 20 people, including small children, who watched a demonstration of how to respond if immigration officers knock on their door. "Take precautions wherever you are."

Sandigo, who came to the US in 1988, has volunteered to be guardian for more than 2,000 children in 15 years, including at least 30 since December. A notary was on hand on Sunday.

Plans for deportation arrests appeared to be in flux after news leaked of an operation in Chicago this week. Trump's "border czar" Tom Homan said on Fox News on Sunday that Chicago was "not off the table, but we're reconsidering when and how we do it."

So-called sanctuary cities, which limit how local police cooperate with federal immigration authorities, have been a favourite Trump target, especially Chicago. Reports that his initial push would be in the nation's third-largest city brought a new sense of urgency and fear.

Chicago became a sanctuary city in the 1980s and has beefed up policies since, including after Trump first took office in 2017. Last week, the City Council heartily rejected a long-shot plan calling for exceptions allowing local police to work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents on deportation cases for people accused or convicted of crimes. —*PTI*



WHAT'S NEXT?

MASSIVE FEDERAL LAYOFFS

1 **President Donald Trump's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) is gearing up to trim federal workforce**

- DOGE will operate "outside the government"
- The entity may try to operate as an independent, non-governmental organisation

LARGEST DEPORTATION IN US HISTORY

2 **Trump may sign executive orders and actions targeting millions of immigrants and their families**

- The second Trump administration is likely to conduct the largest deportation in US history
- The new administration may also dismantle asylum protection system

PROMISES TO ANNEX CANADA AND MEXICO

3 **Trump wants countries like Canada and Mexico to become a part of US to continue enjoying subsidies**

- Trump is unhappy with the $40B American trade deficit in bilateral trade with Canada
- Trump wants to stop illegal immigrants from Mexico intruding into the US, even through Canada

EYES ON GREENLAND AND PANAMA CANAL

4 **Trump is outlining an aggressive foreign policy with little regard to diplomatic considerations or the concerns of US allies**

- The President does not rule out military or economic action to regain control of the Panama Canal and Greenland
- He has threatened Denmark with tariffs if it resisted his offer to purchase Greenland for US national security

ENDING RUSSIA–UKRAINE, ISRAEL–GAZA WARS

5 **Trump wants to wrap up the Russia–Ukraine, Israel–Palestine conflicts by forcing the combatants to make significant compromises**

- Trump may force Ukraine and Russia to mutually agree on a give and take solution on territories
- He has said ending Ukraine and Russia would be "more difficult" to resolve than the current Israeli Palestinian conflict

US EXIT FROM NATO

6 **Trump wants to withdraw the US from NATO, raising worries among national security officials**

- In 2024, President Joe Biden signed into law that any presidential decision to exit NATO must have either two-thirds Senate approval or be authorised through an act of Congress
- Trump could sidestep this NATO guardrail using presidential authority over foreign policy

ABOLISHING 'CITIZENSHIP BY BIRTH'

7 **Trump has promised to end birthright citizenship, besides restricting immigration**

- The US grants citizenship to children born within its borders, regardless of the citizenship of its parents
- Trump and his supporters have argued that the system is being abused

LIFT CLIMATE REGULATIONS

8 **The Republican President has often called climate change a scam and made public plans to withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement once more**

- Trump may loosen regulations on industries such as oil, gas and petrochemicals
- There is also possibility of rollbacks to President's Biden's climate laws

TO STOP 'TRANSGENDER LUNACY'

9 **Trump has pledged to stop the "transgender lunacy" from day one of his second presidency**

- Trump has declared that he would make it the "official policy" to recognise only two genders – male and female
- The US President said he would sign executive orders to end child sexual mutilation, get transgender out of the military and out of elementary, middle and high schools

LOOMING ERA OF GLITTER

Bitcoin soars past $1,00,000 ahead of early action

WASHINGTON, 20 JAN:

The price of bitcoin surged to over USD 109,000 early on Monday, just hours ahead of President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration, as a pumped up cryptocurrency industry bets he will take action soon after returning to the White House.

Once a skeptic who said a few years ago that bitcoin "seems like a scam", Trump has embraced digital currencies with a convert's zeal. He has launched a new cryptocurrency venture and vowed on the campaign trail to take steps early in his presidency to make the US the "crypto capital" of the world.

His promises include creating a US crypto stockpile, enacting industry-friendly regulations and even appointing a crypto "czar" for his administration. "You're going to be very happy with me," Trump told crypto-enthusiasts at a bitcoin conference last summer.

Bitcoin is the world's most popular cryptocurrency and was created in 2009 as a kind of electronic cash uncontrolled by banks or governments. It, and newer forms of cryptocurrencies have moved from the financial fringes to the mainstream in wild fits and starts.

PHOTO: PIXABAY

The highly volatile nature of cryptocurrencies as well as their use by criminals, scammers and rogue nations, has attracted plenty of critics, who say the digital currencies have limited utility and often are just Ponzi schemes.

Trump promised that he would create a special advisory council to provide guidance on creating "clear" and "straightforward" regulations on crypto within the first 100 days of his presidency.

Details about the council and its membership are still unclear, but after winning November's election, Trump named tech executive and venture capitalist David Sacks to be the administration's crypto "czar." —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Pope calls Trump's mass deportation ' a disgrace'

ROME, 20 JAN

Pope Francis said Donald Trump's plans to impose mass deportations of immigrants would be "a disgrace." Pope Franscis added, "this is not how things are resolved," on an Italian talk show. Trump, who is being sworn in on Monday, made mass deportations a signature issue of his campaign and has promised first-day orders to remake immigration policy. Francis, who grew up in Argentina in a family of Italian immigrants, has long prioritized the plight of migrants. He has said the dignity and rights of migrants trump any national security concerns. Pope Francis clashed with Trump nearly a decade ago, calling him "not Christian" for wanting to build a wall across the US-Mexico border. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

8 dead in Serbia elderly home fire

BELGRADE, 20 JAN

Eight people died and seven people were injured in a fire at a home for the elderly in Serbia, on early Monday, Serbian state television, RTS, reported. It said that the blaze erupted around 3.30am in Ba-rajevo, a municipality on the southern edge of Belgrade. Police did not immediately issue an official statement. The RTS report said the injured were transferred to a hospital in Belgrade. *—PTI*

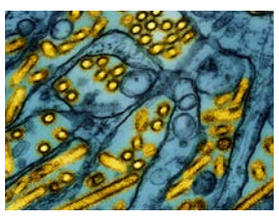


PHOTO: X

Bird flu hits Georgia, 1st outbreak since 2022

ATLANTA, 20 JAN

Bird flu hit a commercial poultry producer in Georgia, the US's top state for chicken production. All commercial poultry operations within a 10 km radius of the producer were put under quarantine and will undergo at least two weeks of surveillance testing. The site had about 45,000 broiler breed-ers when bird flu was detected. "This is a serious threat to Georgia's number one industry and the livelihoods of thousands of Georgians who make their living in our state's poultry industry," Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper said in a news release. In the last month, there have been 84 cases of bird flu across. *—PTI*

Bail hearing on Bangladesh Hindu priest next week

DHAKA, 20 JANUARY

Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmmachari, the spokesperson of Bangladesh Sammilit Sanatani Jagran Jote, has applied for bail in the High Court in the sedition case on the charge of insulting the national flag of Bangladesh, a lawyer said on Monday. In that case, a lower court in Chittagong, the port city of Bangladesh, on 2 January gave an order rejecting Chinmoy's bail application, he said. "We have applied to the High Court on 12 January for Chinmoy's bail", Chinmoy's lawyer Apurba Kumar Bhattachariya, told ANI. "The court will hear the case according to the serial of the pending cases. We hope the hearing will be held next week as the high court only hear the cases on Sunday and Mon-day," he added. *—ANI*

90 Palestinians released in Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal

According to data, all of those released are women or teens

RAMALLAH, 20 JAN

The first three hostages were released from Gaza and the first Palestinian prisoners were freed from Israeli custody as the fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas took hold following 15 months of war, with mixed emotions and more difficult steps ahead over the next six weeks.

According to a list provided by the Palestinian Authority's Commission for Prisoners' Affairs, all of those released are women or teens, the youngest 15. Israel detained them for what it said were offenses related to Israel's security, from throwing stones to more serious accusations like attempted murder.

The ceasefire that began on Sunday morning raises hopes for ending the devastating conflict and returning the nearly 100 remaining hostages abducted in Hamas' 7 October, 2023, attack. But major questions remain about whether fighting will resume after the six-week first phase.

In Tel Aviv, thousands of people who gathered to watch the news on large screens erupted in applause. For months, many had gathered in the square weekly to demand a ceasefire deal.

"An entire nation embraces you," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

Over seven hours later, the first Palestinian prisoners were released. They had been detained for what Israel called offenses related to its security.

Israel's military, which occupies the West Bank, warned Palestinians against public celebration – the release took place after 1am – but crowds thronged the buses after they left the prison, some people climbing on top or waving flags, including those of Hamas. There were fireworks and shouts of "God is great". Those released were hoisted onto others' shoulders or embraced. The next release is due on Saturday, with 33 hostages and nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees to be freed over the ceasefire's 42-day first phase. In just over two weeks, talks are to begin on the far more challenging second phase.

This is just the second ceasefire in the war, longer and more consequential than a weeklong pause in November 2023, with the potential to end the fighting for good. *—PTI*

Displaced Palestinians return to Rafah, a day after the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas came into effect, in Gaza Strip *PHOTO: PTI*

HOUTHIS VOW TO LIMIT ATTACKS ON ISRAELI SHIPS

DUBAI, 20 JAN

Yemen's Houthi rebels have signalled they will limit their attacks in the Red Sea corridor to only Israe-li-affiliated ships as a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip took hold.

The Houthis made the announcement in an email sent to shippers and others on Sunday. The Houthis separately planned a military statement on Monday, likely about the decision.

The Houthis, through their Humanitarian Operations Coordination Center, made the announcement by saying it was "stopping sanctions" on the other vessels it has previously targeted since it started attacks in November 2023.

The Houthis have targeted about 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones since the Israel–Hamas war in the Gaza Strip started in October 2023, after Hamas' surprise attack on Israel that killed 1,200 people and saw 250 others taken hostage.

The Houthis have seized one vessel and sunk two in a campaign that has also killed four sailors. Oth-er missiles and drones have either been intercepted by separate US- and European-led coalitions in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets, which have also included Western military vessels. *—PTI*

'REVENGE' CAUTIOUS

Dr. Anthony Fauci and retired Gen. Mark Milley *PHOTO: X*

Biden pardons Fauci, Capitol attack committee

WASHINGTON, 20 JAN

US President Joe Biden has pardoned Dr. Anthony Fauci, retired Gen. Mark Milley and members of the House committee that investigated the 6 January attack on the Capitol, using the extraordinary powers of his office in his final hours to guard against potential "revenge" by the incoming Trump administration.

The decision by Biden comes after Donald Trump warned of an enemies list filled with those who have crossed him politically or sought to hold him accountable for his attempt to overturn his 2020 election loss and his role in the storming of the US Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Trump has selected Cabinet nominees who backed his election lies and who have pledged to punish those involved in efforts to investigate him.

"The issuance of these pardons should not be mistaken as an acknowledgment that any individual engaged in any wrongdoing, nor should acceptance be misconstrued as an admission of guilt for any offense," Biden said in a statement.

"Our nation owes these public servants a debt of gratitude for their tireless commitment to our country."

It's customary for a president to grant clemency at the end of his term, but those acts of mercy are usually offered to everyday Americans who have been convicted of crimes. But Biden has used the power in the broadest and most untested way possible: to pardon those who have not even been investigated yet. And with the acceptance comes a tacit admission of guilt or wrongdoing, even though those who have been pardoned have not been formally accused of any crimes.

Biden is also extending pardons to members and staff of the 6 January committee, including former Reps. Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger, both Republicans, as well as the US Capitol and D.C. Metropol-itan police officers who testified before the committee. *—PTI*

Gusty winds heighten wildfire risk in California

Trucks drive through a neighborhood destroyed by the Eaton Fire, in Altadena, California *PHOTO: PTI*

LOS ANGELES, 20 JAN

Southern Californians are bracing for gusty winds and a heightened risk of wildfires, less than two weeks after deadly blazes killed at least 27 people and ravaged thousands of homes. The National Weather Service has issued warning of a "particularly dangerous situation" for parts of Los Angeles and Ventura counties from Monday afternoon through Tuesday morning due to low humidity and damaging Santa Ana winds.

Gusts could peak at 113kmph along the coast and 161kmph in the mountains and foothills. Windy weather and single-digit humidity are expected to linger through Thursday, said Rich Thomp-son, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service.

Thompson said the fire risk is also elevated because the region hasn't seen rain since April.

Critical fire weather with wind gusts up to 97kmph was also forecast for other Southern California communities on Monday and Tuesday stretching to San Diego, with residents urged to take steps to get ready to evacuate such as creating an emergency kit and keeping cars filled with at least a half tank of gas.

The warnings come as firefighters continue to battle two major blazes in the Los Angeles area, the Palisades and Eaton fires, which have destroyed more than 14,000 structures since they broke out during fierce winds on 7 January.

The Palisades fire was 52 per cent contained on Sunday and the Eaton fire 81 per cent contained, according to fire officials. California Governor Gavin Newsom has positioned 45 fire engines across the region in addition to water-dropping aircraft and hand crews to enable a quick response should a new fire break out, ac-cording to the governor's office of emergency services. *—PTI*

Xi's envoy Zheng meets Vance, Musk

BEIJING, 20 JAN

China's Vice President Han Zheng held meetings with the US vice president-elect JD Vance and major business leaders in Washington on the eve of Donald Trump's inauguration, as the two major pow-ers tackle ongoing tensions over trade and technology.

Zheng, who serves as an envoy for Chinese President Xi Jinping at the inauguration, "discussed a range of topics including fentanyl, balancing trade and regional stability" with Vance, Trump transi-tion team said.

Zheng stressed the "extensive common interests and enormous space of cooperation" the US and China share in economic and trade relations despite "some disagreements and frictions", said a Chi-nese Foreign Ministry statement on Monday.

Trump has threatened to impose tariffs and other measures on China and hinted how the two rival powers could cooperate on issues such as regional conflicts and curbing the export of substances used in the production of fentanyl. In an unorthodox move, Trump last month invited Xi to his inauguration. No head of state has previ-ously made an official visit to the US for the inauguration, according to State Department historical records. While Xi will not personally attend the event, he and Trump held a phone call on Friday during which they discussed trade, fentanyl and TikTok. The Chinese social media app restored service to users in the US on Sunday, hours after it went dark in response to a federal ban which Trump said he would pause by executive order on Monday. Zheng met with Musk and other top US business executives, including representatives of the US–China Business Council and the US Chamber of Commerce in Washington, DC, Chinese Foreign Ministry said. *—PTI*

Vice President of China with US VP-elect JD Vance on Monday *PHOTO: X*

China executes two for social revenge killings

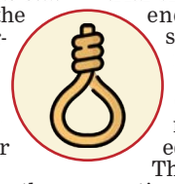
BEIJING, 20 JANUARY

Chinese authorities on Monday executed two men who were involved in carrying out deadly social revenge killings with a car and knife last year, according to a media report.

The authorities on Monday executed a 62-year-old man who drove his car into people exercising outside a stadium last year, killing 35 people and injuring over 40, the report said.

Fan Weiqiu, who was stated to be angry over the division of the property after his divorce, carried out the attack a day before the Chinese military held its prestigious air show in Zhuhai City.

He was executed less than a month after a court sentenced him to death.



The Zhuhai Intermediate People's Court held a public trial of Fan for the crime of endangering public safety by dangerous means in accordance with the law, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The court termed his motive 'extremely vile' and 'the methods' used by him 'particularly cruel'.

Also, officials on Monday executed Xu Jiajin, a man convicted of killing eight people and injuring 17 in a knife attack at a vocational school in east China's Jiangsu Province. The death penalty was executed by the Intermediate People's Court in the city of Wuxi, Jiang-su, after the Supreme People's Court approved the death sentence, Xinhua news agency reported *—PTI*

BACK IN US

Let America own 50% of TikTok: Trump

WASHINGTON/ NEW YORK 20 JAN

TikTok is back in the US after President-elect Donald Trump on Sunday praised it and said let the gov-ernment own 50 per cent of the popular short video sharing platform.

TikTok went dark in the US on Saturday night because of a legislation, but it was back within less than 24 hours after Trump vowed to issue an executive order on his first day in office to delay the enforcement of the law.

The short-video app is used by 170 million Americans.

"Who in this audience goes with TikTok? Many? Frankly, we have no choice. We have to save a lot of jobs. We don't want to give our business to China. We don't want to give our business to other peo-ple,"

PHOTO: X

Trump added. Stating that the solution to the TikTok issue is a joint venture, Trump said, "They did that a long time ago when they had a different president. They didn't know that I was going to be the president. So I said, very simply, a joint venture. If you don't approve, they're out of business. They're worth noth-ing. If you do approve, they're worth like a trillion dollars." During his first term as president, Donald Trump led the effort to ban TikTok, the hugely popular vid-eo-sharing app he said posed a threat to US national security.

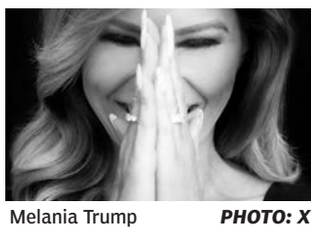
But on the eve of his return to the White House, the president-elect is being hailed as the app's sav-iour.

But the details remained murky and it was unclear whether Trump was proposing control by the US government or another company. Trump did not elaborate during a rally on Sunday night, where he hailed the move.

Trump ended up joining the app last year and has grown his following to nearly 15 million users. *—PTI*

Melania Trump launches her own meme coin

WASHINGTON DC, 20 JAN



Melania Trump *PHOTO: X*

US President-elect Donald Trump's wife, Melania Trump, has launched her crypto currency ahead of Trump's inauguration, CNN reported.

In a social media post on Sunday, Melania Trump launched her cryptocurrency $MELANIA, tanking her husband's cryptocurrency $TRUMP, which was launched two days ago. In a post on X, Melania Trump wrote, "The Official Melania Meme is live! You can buy $MELANIA now. https://melaniameme.com."

Meme coins are a type of highly volatile cryptocurrency inspired by popular internet and carry no intrinsic value, however, its price can rise or reduce. The two coins are trading on the Solana block chain. Trump's meme coin witnessed a rise over the weekend and was trading at over USD 70 by Sunday afternoon, according to CoinGecko, CNN re-ported. However, the coin's price reduced to USD 40 after Melania Trump launched her own coin.

Since then, it has recovered some of those losses and was trading around USD 60 early Monday while $MELANIA was trading just over USD 12 early Monday, according to CoinGecko. $TRUMP is the first cryptocurrency which has been supported by Trump, who once said that bitcoin was "based on thin air." *—ANI*

Gold trades flat at ₹82,000/10g; silver slides ₹500

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

Gold prices remained flat at Rs 82,000 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Traders waited for US President-elect Donald Trump's inaugural address later on Monday before placing any directional bets, marketmen said. On Friday, the precious metal surged Rs 700 to settle near a record high at Rs 82,000 per 10 grams. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity traded flat at Rs 81,600 per 10 grams on Monday. On October 31 last year, gold of 99.9 per cent purity and 99.5 per cent purity hit a record high of Rs 82,400 and Rs 82,000 per 10 grams, respectively, in the local markets.Silver prices decreased by Rs 500 to Rs 93,000 per kg. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Rupee rises 5 paise to close at 86.55 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 20 JAN

The rupee appreciated 5 paise to close at 86.55 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, as an overnight decline in crude oil prices and the US dollar index supported investor sentiments. Besides, a positive trend in domestic equities also helped the local currency, Forex traders said the rupee is likely to trade within a volatile range of 86.20-86.80 ahead of key events in the global and domestic economic landscape. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened on a strong note at 86.48 against the greenback. During the day, the local unit touched an intraday high of 86.46 and a low of 86.57. It finally closed at 86.55 (provisional), a rise of 5 paise against the US dollar. *—PTI*

Australia's FINDI acquires fintech's BANKIT

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

Australia-based fintech firm FINDI has announced the acquisition of Noida-based BANKIT for approximately AU$30 million (around Rs 162 crore). The acquisition was executed through FINDI's subsidiary, Transaction Solutions International (India), and signifies the company's commitment to bolstering financial access in rural and semi-urban regions of India. Listed on the Australian stock exchange, FINDI operates a financial services marketplace aimed at the underbanked population through its extensive merchant network. BANKIT, with over 129,000 outlets across 28 states and serving more than 12,000 pin codes, been pivotal in providing solutions to underserved communities. *—PTI*

Veritas Finance files ₹2,800 cr IPO draft with SEBI

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

Veritas Finance Ltd, a retail-focused non-deposit taking non-banking financial company (NBFC), has filed a draft prospectus with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) seeking approval for an initial public offering (IPO) worth Rs 2,800 crore. The IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 600 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of Rs 2,200 crore by investors and individual shareholders. The company plans to use the net proceeds to augment its capital base and meet future business requirements. Veritas Finance, which was founded in 2015, provides small business loans to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and self-employed individuals. The NBFC has reportedly achieved the fastest growth in loans among peers between 2022 and 2024, with a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 61.76 per cent. *—PTI*

India leading in technology evolution, says WEF report

AI-driven agricultural programmes is the main achievement

DAVOS, 20 JAN

India is positioned as a leading force in global economic growth and digital innovation, highlighting its status as a hub for startups and technological advancement, the World Economic Forum (WEF) stated on Monday. On the inaugural day of its Annual Meeting 2025, the WEF presented a six-year impact journey report from the Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) India, the Forum's liaison office in the country.

The WEF's association with India spans over 40 years, evolving into a robust partnership with national and state governments, business leaders, civil society, and experts. This collaboration has fostered numerous impactful initiatives aligned with shared priorities, emphasising the necessity for developments that utilise technology as an enabler.

C4IR India, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018, underlines India's commitment to responsibly harnessing emerging technologies for societal benefits. The Forum stated that the Centre exemplifies a model for technology-driven development with tangible impacts.

The recent report details C4IR India's milestones and underscores the significance of multistakeholder collaboration in scaling technologies to tackle pressing developmental issues. Among its achievements are AI-driven agricultural programmes that enhance farmers' incomes, healthcare solutions for vital services access, and frameworks for sustainable urban development. The transformative work of C4IR India has reached 1.25 million citizens, improving livelihoods and healthcare access through partnerships across public and private sectors, academia, and civil society. "C4IR India has set a benchmark for transformative progress, driving Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies across agriculture, health, and aviation," remarked Jeremy Jurgens, Managing Director of the WEF.

S Krishnan, Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), emphasised the partnership's focus on leveraging technology for challenges in health, education, and smart cities. Initiatives like AI for India 2030 aim to realise AI's potential for societal benefit.

As India accelerates its growth, C4IR India plans to expand its reach to 10 million citizens through initiatives such as the Space Economy programme and AVIATE India, focusing on improving aerial mobility and urban connectivity. *—PTI*

Healthcare solutions for vital services access, and frameworks for sustainable urban development are the other achievements ***PHOTO: X***

Billionaire wealth soars 3 times by $2T in 2024: Oxfam

DAVOS, 20 JAN

Billionaire wealth across the globe surged by USD 2 trillion in 2024 to USD 15 trillion at a rate three times faster than the previous year, a study showed on Monday here as the richest of the world began to assemble for their annual jamboree in this ski resort town.

In its flagship inequity report released every year on the first day of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, Oxfam International contrasted the huge jump in the billionaire wealth with the number of people living in poverty barely having changed since 1990.

Wealth of billionaires in Asia increased by USD 299 billion in 2024.

The year 2024 saw 204 new billionaires getting minted -- an average of nearly four every week. Asia itself got 41 new billionaires in the year.

In its report titled 'Takers, not Makers', Oxfam said the richest 1 per cent in the Global North extracted USD 30 million an hour from the Global South through the financial systems in 2023. *—PTI*

NCLT orders liquidation of Go First airline

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Monday ordered the liquidation of Go First, the budget carrier that stopped flying nearly two years ago amid financial woes.

In May 2023, the airline filed for a voluntary insolvency resolution process.

The tribunal, in a 15-page order, said it is ordering the liquidation of the corporate debtor Go Airlines (India) Ltd.

On Monday, the NCLT said the Committee of Creditors (CoC) in the legislative scheme is empowered to take the decision to liquidate the corporate debtor, at any time after its constitution and before confirmation of the resolution plan.

"It is well settled that the decision taken by the CoC for liquidation in commercial wisdom of the CoC should not be interfered with by the Adjudicating Authority. Further, the resolution for liquidation of the corporate debtor was approved by the CoC with 100 per cent voting. Therefore, this Adjudicating Authority sees no merit in interfering with the commercial wisdom of the CoC," it noted.

The order comes a little over two months after the Supreme Court, on November 7, 2024, ordered the liquidation of the once-storied airline Jet Airways, which had stopped flying in April 2019.

Go Air, which was rebranded as Go First, flew for more than 17 years before suspending operations on 3 May, 2023.

Dinkar Tiruvannadapuram Venkatasubramanian has been appointed as the liquidator. The liquidator has been asked to follow up and continue to investigate the financial affairs of the corporate debtor. "The liquidator shall also follow up the pending applications for their disposal during the process of liquidation, including the initiation of steps for recovery of dues of the corporate debtor as per law," according to the order. *—PTI*

Markets rally on global trends, Kotak Mahindra Bank surges

MUMBAI, 20 JAN

Stock market benchmarks Sensex and Nifty experienced a significant uptick in early trading on Monday, buoyed by positive global market trends and a remarkable surge in shares of Kotak Mahindra Bank.

The 30-share BSE index, Sensex, rose by 398.21 points to reach 77,017.54, while the NSE Nifty climbed 105.15 points to 23,308.35. Kotak Mahindra Bank's stock soared by 9 per cent following the announcement of a 10 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit, amounting to Rs 4,701 crore, largely driven by robust performance in its capital markets linked divisions.

Among other notable gainers were State Bank of India, NTPC, Power Grid, Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra, and Bajaj Finance. Conversely, stocks like IndusInd Bank, Tata Motors, Tata Consultancy Services, Adani Ports, Axis Bank, and Mahindra & Mahindra lagged behind.

Asian markets displayed mixed performance, with Tokyo, Shanghai, and Hong Kong trading positively, while Seoul reported a decline. In the US, markets concluded the previous week on a high note.

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, remarked that global stock markets were likely to remain in a 'wait and watch' mode as developments around 'Trump 2.0' were anticipated.

On the commodities front, global oil benchmark Brent crude saw a slight dip of 0.17 per cent, trading at USD 80.65 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) reported a net sell-off of equities amounting to Rs 3,318.06 crore on Friday. The BSE had previously closed down by 423.49 points, or 0.55 per cent, at 76,619.33. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

INCREASE FROM ₹ 11.5L CR

₹15L cr needed for Viksit Bharat goals: Mandaviya

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has called for the government's annual infrastructure investment budget to soar to Rs 15 lakh crore, an increase from the current Rs 11.5 lakh crore, over the next 25 years. This ambitious plan is essential to realise the vision of 'Viksit Bharat @2047' in conjunction with India's centenary of independence.

Speaking at the ISSA-ESIC International Seminar focused on formalisation and social security for informal sector workers, Mandaviya highlighted that under the Narendra Modi-led government, infrastructure spending has risen from Rs 1.2 lakh crore in 2012 to Rs 11.5 lakh crore projected for 2024. He emphasised that only through sustained investment can India achieve its goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047.

Mansukh Mandaviya ***PHOTO: ANI***

The Minister pointed out the necessity for social security for workers in emerging sectors, notably gig workers. He revealed that while social security coverage stood at 24 per cent in 2014, it has now increased to 48 per cent—68 per cent when food security is included.

Mandaviya stated that 600 million Indians now benefit from health security, receiving free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh, while food security provisions reach 800 million people who receive 5 kg of foodgrains each month at no cost. *—PTI*

Zomato shares drop nearly 4% as Q3 profit declines

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

Shares of food tech unicorn Zomato on Monday declined nearly 4 per cent after the firm reported 57.2 per cent drop in consolidated net profit for the December quarter.

The stock dropped 3.14 per cent to settle at Rs 240.95 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 8 per cent to Rs 228.80.

At the NSE, it went lower by 3.63 per cent to Rs 239.75.

Zomato on Monday reported 57.2 per cent drop in consolidated net profit for the December quarter to Rs 59 crore, with its margins facing pressure due to aggressive store expansion to meet orders from its quick-commerce platform Blinkit.

The company had earned a net profit of Rs 138 crore in the year-ago period.

Total expenses also shot up to Rs 5,533 crore, from Rs 3,383 crore in the corresponding period of 2023-24. *—PTI*

Kumbh Mela to generate 12L gig jobs: NLB Services

MUMBAI, 20 JAN

The ongoing Maha Kumbh, which commenced on 13 January and will conclude on February 26, is expected to generate 12 lakh gig and temporary jobs across various sectors, NLB Services CEO Sachin Alug on Monday.

The observations by global technology and digital talent solutions provider NLB Services are based on internal data analysis and industry reports.

The Uttar Pradesh government expects to host 400 million devotees. This historic congregation is emerging as a powerhouse for economic growth and temporary employment, he said. The economic ripple effect of the Maha Kumbh extends across multiple sectors, including infrastructure development, event management, security services, local trade, tourism, entertainment, and horticulture, fostering growth in both traditional and modern business segments, Alug added. *—PTI*

Adani made ₹10,000 from first trade in 1981

AHMEDABAD, 20 JAN

Billionaire Gautam Adani, a college dropout who built a multi-billion dollar infrastructure empire spanning ports to energy, on Monday revealed that he made a commission of Rs 10,000 from his first trade at the age of 19.

Born in Ahmedabad, Adani, 62, moved to Mumbai at the age of 16 and joined a diamond assortment company. He quickly picked up trade and in about three years, started his own diamond trading brokerage in Mumbai's Zaveri Bazar.

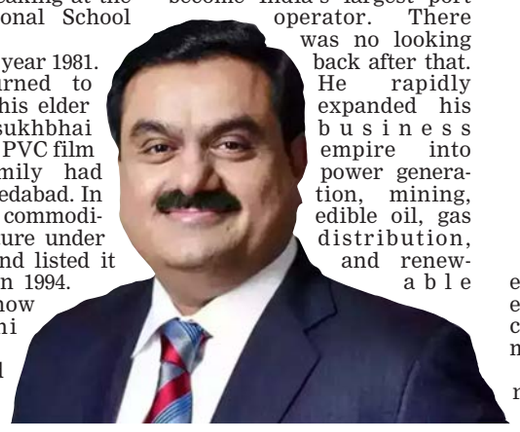
"I still recall the day I did my first trade with a Japanese buyer. I made a commission of Rs 10,000. I was 19 years old, and this was the start of my journey as an entrepreneur," he said while speaking at the Adani International School here.

This was in the year 1981.

He soon returned to Gujarat to help his elder brother Mahasukhbhai run a small-scale PVC film factory the family had acquired in Ahmedabad. In 1988, he set up a commodities trading venture under Adani Exports and listed it on the bourses in 1994. The firm is now called Adani Enterprises.

Adani started operating a port at Mundra on the Gujarat coast a decade later. He grew the business to become India's largest port operator. There was no looking back after that. He rapidly expanded his business empire into power generation, mining, edible oil, gas distribution, and renewable energy. His business interests expanded into airports, cement, and, more recently, media.

He is today the world's 19th richest person with a wealth of USD 76 billion. *—PTI*



- He rapidly expanded his business empire into power generation, mining, edible oil, gas distribution, and renewable energy. His business interests expanded into airports, cement, and, more recently, media

AFTER ADANI TURMOIL

Hindenburg denies US SEC investigation

TORONTO/NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

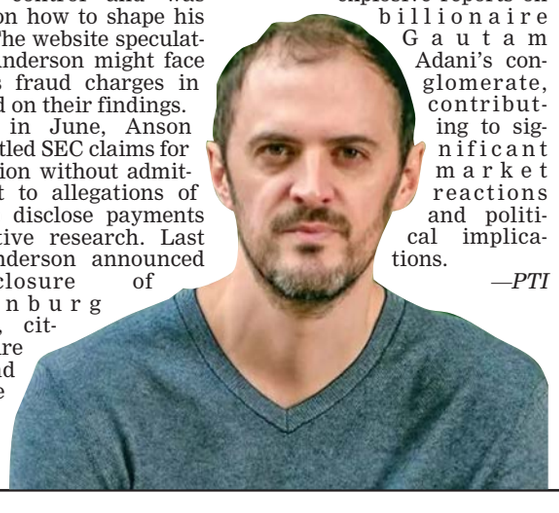
US short-seller Hindenburg Research has dismissed claims that it is under investigation by the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), following allegations concerning its founder, Nate Anderson, and connections to a hedge fund in relation to potentially misleading reports.

In a statement, the firm asserted, "Hindenburg is not under investigation by the SEC, to our knowledge, and any suggestion to the contrary is false." This defence comes in response to a report from the Canadian portal Market Frauds, which cited court documents from a defamation lawsuit alleging Anderson had collaborated with Moez Kassam, head of Canada's Anson hedge fund, when creating Hindenburg's reports.

The portal claimed that this alleged partnership could lead to securities fraud charges, as it purportedly involves the creation of bearish reports without proper disclosure. Hindenburg countered these claims as "uniformly false," labelling the accusations as based on a "Tongan blog" filled with inaccuracies. They insisted their reports are compiled through rigorous independent verification.

Market Frauds released purported email exchanges between Anderson and Anson, alleging that Anderson lacked editorial control and was directed on how to shape his reports. The website speculated that Anderson might face securities fraud charges in 2025 based on their findings.

Earlier in June, Anson Funds settled SEC claims for $2.25 million without admitting guilt to allegations of failing to disclose payments for negative research. Last week, Anderson announced the closure of Hindenburg Research, citing a desire to spend more time with family. The firm gained notoriety in 2023 for its explosive reports on billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate, contributing to significant market reactions and political implications. *—PTI*



India aims at $250B engineering exports

GREATER NOIDA, 19 JAN

The Indian government has set an ambitious goal of achieving USD 1 trillion in exports by 2030, with a significant contribution of USD 250 billion expected from the engineering sector, according to Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal.

Addressing a conference for construction equipment manufacturers, Barthwal highlighted the importance of the engineering sector, which encompasses automobiles and equipment, representing nearly 25 per cent of India's total exports. "India is celebrated for its leather, textiles, and traditional sectors, but the engineering industry is crucial for our export future," he stated. Barthwal emphasised that this target is grounded in current realities, thanks to a burgeoning middle class and the government's concerted efforts in infrastructure development, including enhancements in ports, airports, railway systems, and road networks. *—PTI*

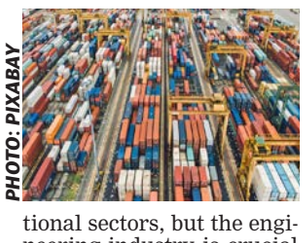


PHOTO: PIXABAY

Rishabh named captain of Lucknow Super Giants

This is going to be his second stint as a leader in IPL matches

KOLKATA, 20 JAN

Dynamic keeper–batter Rishabh Pant was on Monday named the captain of Lucknow Super Giants for the upcoming IPL and he vowed to give his "200 percent" to win the team's maiden title. Pant was picked at the mega auction for an IPL record Rs 27 crore by the franchise owner Sanjiv Goenka.

"I will give my 200 percent. That's my commitment to you. I will try whatever is there in my power to repay the faith. I am really excited and looking forward to new beginning and new energy. And have a blast out there with lot of fun," Pant told media persons after being unveiled as the new skipper.

This is Pant's second stint as a leader in the IPL.

Asked about his new team going the distance in the next IPL, Pant sounded optimistic.

"Definitely happy with the team. We have a mix of youth and experienced players. We have not been where we wanted to be... that's the journey how we can take this franchise to newer heights.

Despite DC's interest in keeping him, they were not fully committed to him leading the side, prompting Pant to re-enter the auction.

Lucknow Super Giants owner Sanjiv Goenka with the team's new captain Rishabh Pant and mentor Zaheer Khan in Kolkata on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

- Despite DC's interest in keeping him, they were not fully committed to him leading the side, prompting Pant to re-enter the auction

At the auction, they pipped Sunrisers Hyderabad, LSG to get Pant for Rs 20.75 crore, eventually they had to raise their price to Rs 27 crore to outbid Delhi Capitals' right-to-match card.

Speaking about his captaincy mantra, "I've learnt from a lot of captains, seniors. You don't only learn from captains, a lot of senior players are also there.

Pant, who had been with DC since 2016, was appointed captain in 2021 and led the team until 2023 before a near-fatal car accident in December 2022 had ruled him out. *—PTI*

MOVING ON

Djokovic gets his apologies, ready to focus on Alcaraz

MELBOURNE, 20 JAN

Novak Djokovic got the mea culpas he wanted from the Australian Open's local broadcaster and its employee who insulted him on air. So, according to tournament organisers, the 24-time Grand Slam champion is ready to concentrate on his quarterfinal showdown with Carlos Alcaraz.

"Novak acknowledges the apology has been given in public as requested," read a statement issued on Monday by Tennis Australia, "and is now moving on and focusing on his next match."

That, perhaps, will draw a curtain on the bizarre off-court distraction as Djokovic pursues what would be an 11th championship at Melbourne Park and a record 25th major trophy overall.

After winning at Rod Laver Arena on Sunday evening to set up the contest against No. 3 Alcaraz, Djokovic declined to do the customary post-match on court TV interview, but didn't immediately say why, eliciting some jeering from spectators. Only later that night, at his news conference, did Djokovic explain that he was taking a stand to protest comments made by Tony Jones on Channel 9 on Friday. *—PTI*

Skater Kotwal hopes to qualify for Winter Olympics

NEW DELHI, 20 JAN

Skater Shruti Kotwal has set her sights on the Asian Winter Games (AWG) in China next month as a platform to qualify for the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy. Kotwal, who is training in the US, will be leading the country's 41-member athlete contingent in the AWG to be held from February 7 to 14. Kotwal said the AWG will be a big opportunity for her to test herself against the best skaters in the world. "I'm focusing on the 500m and 1000m events for Olympic qualification. This will be Kotwal's second appearance in the AWG after 2017, when the Asian meet was held in Japan. *—PTI*

PHOTO:WIKIPEDIA

I don't need to prove anything to anyone: Axar Patel

KOLKATA, 20 JAN

A contender to take veteran Ravindra Jadeja's place permanently at some point, spin-bowling all-rounder Axar Patel is aware of the possibilities that may arise during India's big Test transition but he doesn't feel the need to prove "anything to anyone" to make his case. Axar, who turned 31 on Monday, has been Jadeja's under-study for the past decade with same skill-sets but with a bit of less finesse than his fellow senior Gujarati. In his 11-year-international career, Axar has taken 184 wickets across three formats and 55 of them have come in 14 Tests, two of which were in Bangladesh when Jadeja was unfit. Talk about Indian cricket's transition and whether he stands to gain, India's T20 vice-captain's offered a matter of fact response. "Yes, a transition phase is coming, and ultimately, it's the selectors' and captain's call. I don't feel the need to prove anything to anyone," Axar gave an uncomplicated answer. *—PTI*

KL Rahul to miss Karnataka's Ranji against Punjab

BENGALURU, 20 JAN

Seasoned batter KL Rahul, who is recovering from an elbow niggle, was not included in the Karnataka Ranji Trophy squad for their penultimate Elite Group C match against Punjab, beginning here on 23 January. The PTI had reported on 18 January that Rahul could be a part of the state side for its last league match against Haryana on 30 January. The wicket-keeper-batter has been named in India's ODI squad for the three-match home series against England, starting on 6 February, and the ICC Champions Trophy, scheduled from 19 February. Opener Mayank Agarwal will lead the 16-man side that also features India pacer Prasidh Krishna and top-order batter Devdutt Padikkal, who made a fifty and hundred in three Vijay Hazare Trophy matches recently. *—PTI*

Singapore set to appoint Sridhar as new singles coach

SINGAPORE, 20 JAN

The Singapore Badminton Association (SBA) is set to hire former India international Anup Sridhar as its new singles coach, according to reports, here on Monday. "The move is subject to the successful application of an employment pass," the Channel News Asia reported quoting SBA. Sridhar, who has coached top singles players such as Lakshya Sen and PV Sindhu, will work under the "guidance" of South Korean coach Kim Ji-hyun, the Channel report stated. Kim will continue to be the singles head coach for both men's and women's teams, with Sridhar offering "additional support", said SBA's vice-president of business development and communications David Tan. *—PTI*

Women's U19 T20: Debutant Nigeria bag historic win over NZ

KUALA LUMPUR, 20 JAN

Debutants Nigeria scripted the unimaginable as they stunned a formidable New Zealand by two runs for a historic win in a rain-interrupted low-scoring thriller of the ICC Women's U-19 T20 World Cup in which both sides were restricted for under-70 totals here on Monday.

Nigeria scored 65–6 batting first, before producing an energetic display on the field derailed New Zealand's run chase.

The Kiwis were 57–5, needing nine runs with one over to go in the 13-over contest. However, tight bowling from pacer Lilian Udeh got them over the line with the Kiwis falling short by just two runs.

Udeh (19) and skipper Lucky Piety (18) were the only ones to hit double figures in the game for Nigeria, while Anika Todd top-scored for New Zealand with a 19-run effort.

Football and athletics are popular sports in Nigeria, unlike in the south of the continent (South Africa, Zimbabwe) where cricket has a big fan following.

But the Nigerian girls placed the spotlight on their country's cricketing growth by becoming the first West African country to qualify for a global tournament and then producing the biggest shock by upsetting an ICC full member nation in a Group C match.

Nigerian girls celebrate their victory against New Zealand in the ICC Women's U-19 T20 World Cup at Kuala Lumpur **PHOTO: X**

The Nigerians were left to wait for an opportunity after their contest with Samoa on Saturday was abandoned due to rain.

Wet weather again threatened the proceedings in Sarawak, but the African nation made the most of their chances once it was confirmed there would be play, albeit a reduced contest of 13 overs each.

In another match of the day, Australia beat Bangladesh by two wickets in a tense Group D match and all but secured their progression to the next stage.

USA also announced itself as a World Cup force after stunning Ireland in Johor, winning by nine wickets and drastically improving their net run rate position in Group B. *—PTI*

Sinner gets past Rune at Aus Open after net, medical delays

MELBOURNE, 20 JAN

First came the medical timeouts, one each for Jannik Sinner and Holger Rune with the temperature above 32 Celsius at Australian Open. Then came an unusual 20-minute delay because the net at Rod Laver Arena detached from the court after being hit by a big Sinner serve.

In the end, Sinner put his physical struggles aside and won and the defending champion moved into the quarterfinals at Melbourne Park on Monday by eliminating the 13th-seeded Rune 6–3 3–6 6–3 6–2.

"I knew in my mind ... I would struggle today," Sinner said later.

He has won 18 consecutive tour-level matches. Last season, Sinner went 73-6 with eight titles, the first man with that many tournament championships in a single year since Andy Murray in 2016.

That haul included Sinner's first two Grand Slam trophies, at Australian Open in January and the US Open in September, the latter shortly after he was exonerated for testing positive for an anabolic steroid twice in March. His case is still unresolved with a hearing scheduled for April.

Jannik Sinner **PHOTO: X**

Rune, a 21-year-old from Denmark, was trying to get to the quarterfinals for the first time. Sinner will face No. 8 Alex de Minaur of Australia or unseeded Alex Michelsen of the US in the semifinals.

A second Italian joined Sinner in the quarterfinals when 55th-ranked Lorenzo Sonego got that far for the first time. He will face Ben Shelton of the US or Gael Monfils of France.

The men's quarterfinals will be Novak Djokovic vs Carlos Alcaraz, and Alexander Zverev vs Tommy Paul.

In the women's fourth round, Madison Keys, the 2017 US Open runner-up, eliminated 2022 Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina 6-3 1-6 6-3, and now plays Elina Svitolina, a 6-4 6-1 winner against Veronika Kudermetova. Svitolina and Monfils are married.

The other women's matches on Monday are Emma Navarro vs Daria Kasatkina, and Iga Swiatek vs Eva Lys at night. *—PTI*

Praggnanandhaa wins; Gukesh, Erigaisi draw

WIJK AAN ZEE, 20 JAN

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa defeated compatriot P Harikrishna, while Arjun Erigaisi settled for a draw in the second round of 87th Tata Steel Chess Tournament here.

This was after world champion D Gukesh played out a draw with Russian-turned-Slovenian Vladimir Fedoseev while Leon Luke Mendonca lost another game, this time to Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan.

Praggnanandhaa's win over Harikrishna was a master-class on defence and counter-attack. Playing white for the second time in as many days, Harikrishna could not find his magical touch even though he performed slightly better in the middle game.

The younger Indian took him to the ropes and eventually the endgame, which should have been drawn.

Harikrishna faltered when it was necessary to put up resistance and Praggnanandhaa made the most of it to emerge victorious.

Erigaisi pressed hard against local hero Anish Giri, who was almost winning against Gukesh in the opening round.

The battle took a steep turn with both players fighting for advantage in the rook and knight endgame but as it turned out, the draw was a result that most experts expected. Fabiano Caruana was the player of the day as he gradually crushed second best Dutchman Jorden van Foreest right from the early middle game. *—PTI*

India captain Rohit, Yashasvi in Mumbai's next Ranji squad

MUMBAI, 20 JAN

India captain Rohit Sharma will show up in a Ranji Trophy match for the first time in almost a decade after he and rising star were named in Mumbai's squad for their fixture against J&K, starting on 23 January at MCA-BKC Ground here.

The team will continue to be led by the seasoned Ajinkya Rahane, the Mumbai Cricket Association said on Monday while announcing the squad.

Rohit had confirmed his participation for the next round of the Ranji Trophy match on Saturday during a press conference to announce India's squads for limited-overs series against England and the Champions Trophy next month. When asked if he would play in the next domestic game for his state team, Rohit replied, "I will".

There faced questions over Rohit's form in Tests after his forgettable outing in his last eight Tests, including against New Zealand at home and against Australia Down Under.

The India skipper had showed up for a training session for Mumbai on January 15 as it became clear after the team's disastrous Australia tour that the BCCI has made it mandatory for the players to feature in domestic circuit.

Soon after, Jaiswal too joined the Mumbai camp which trained at the BKC ground as he had a few batting sessions with his domestic team.

The BCCI recently made it mandatory for all contracted India players to participate in domestic cricket except when there are fitness issues. *—PTI*

Mbappé scores 2 as Madrid beats Las Palmas 4–1

MADRID, 20 JAN

With Kylian Mbappé putting on a show again, Real Madrid returned to the top of the Spanish league.

Mbappé continued his scoring streak with a brace as Madrid routed Las Palmas 4–1 on Sunday, prompting a big ovation at Santiago Bernabeu stadium for the France star who has struggled at times in his first season with the Spanish powerhouse.

"It's always a dream to get a standing ovation at this stadium," Mbappé said. "I've adapted to the team and I can play the way I want to. Everyone enjoys the team's game. All the Real Madrid players are leaders because it's the best team in the world." *—PTI*

AMORIM'S SHOCK CLAIM

The worst Man United team in history?

MANCHESTER, 20 JAN

It has never been this bad at Manchester United.

Well, that's the opinion of the club's latest manager about his underperforming team: "We are being the worst, maybe, in the history of Manchester United," said Ruben Amorim on Sunday.

Here's a look at some of the numbers behind Amorim's comment, which came after a 3-1 loss to Brighton:

United is in the 13th position in the 20-team Premier League after 21 of 38 games. With 26 points, United is closer to the relegation zone than the European qualification places and on course for its lowest finish in the Premier League era (since 1992), which is eighth last year.

United is behind Premier League leader Liverpool, its great rival by 24 points.

Ruben Amorim **PHOTO: X**

The last time United had worse home form than this season, according to Premier League statistician Opta was in 1893-94. The team has six losses from its first 12 league games at Old Trafford.

The team has lost 7 out of the 15 games since Amorim he took charge in November to replace Erik ten Hag.

It is also to be noted that United had finished in the top two positions, 20 times in the 26 full seasons under manager Alex Ferguson, while it has finished in the top two position only two times since Ferguson retired in 2013. On both occasions, United was in second place.

Amorim is the 10th manager — either permanent or interim — appointed by United since Ferguson's retirement.

The estimated worth of Man United is $6.55 billion, according to Forbes. That places the club in 14th place in Forbes' list of the world's most valuable sports teams in its most recent ranking. *—PTI*

K'taka's mantra: Harness youth and experience

BENGALURU, 20 JAN

The heady combination of youth experience that helped Karnataka end their five-year title drought with the Vijay Hazare Trophy triumph will add strength to the state side's quest for more trophies in the future, said head coach Yere Goud. Karnataka had parted ways with veteran batter and former skipper Manish Pandey mid-season.

But newcomers such as Ravichandran Smaran, KV Aneesh, KL Shrijith and Abhilash Shetty stepped in seamlessly and chipped in alongside experienced players like Mayank Agarwal and Vasuki Koushik.

Goud, a former Karnataka skipper, said they started the preparations for the tournament with a course correction after getting knocked out of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy in the quarterfinals.

Yere Goud **PHOTO: X**

"We'd good mix of young and seasoned players. It was all about harnessing them. After the end of the Syed Musthaq Ali Trophy, we knew the areas where we have to improve as a team. We defined the roles of the players for this tournament," Goud told PTI.

Karnataka stopped the Vidarbha juggernaut in the title clash at Vadodara on Saturday.

Goud said Karnataka's transformation was helmed by captain Agarwal, who had a wonderful outing as the leader and a batter. *—PTI*